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**Contrastive Rhetoric of English Persuasive Correspondence  
in the Thai Business Context: Cross-Cultural  
Sales Promotion, Request and Invitation**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research focuses on the contrastive analysis of authentic persuasive business correspondence written in English by Thai speakers and native English speakers in the Thai business context. Three types of persuasive correspondence – sales promotion, request, and invitation – were analysed from contrastive text linguistic and pragmatic perspectives. The purpose was to examine, compare and contrast their rhetorical structures, functions and linguistic realisations as well as persuasive and politeness strategies, and to compare these features to those found in textbook samples of persuasive letters in order to investigate the extent to which those samples represent the authentic, real-life correspondence.

The findings report on cross-cultural variations which differentiate the persuasive writing patterns and strategies of Thais and native English speakers. Despite some shared writing conventions, the findings reveal diversity in some rhetorical moves, linguistic realisations, rhetorical appeals and politeness strategies. The diversity includes some cultural-bound discourse patterns and cultural-specific textual features, many of which can be traced to interference from the Thai language and culture. An exploration of the nature of sales promotion, request, and invitation letters presented in one American and two Thai textbooks on Business English writing reveals that their letter samples reflect the characteristics of the authentic corpus in the business contexts to which they belong.

The implications of this research are twofold. First, it has implications for the teaching of English business letter writing especially in the Thai context and the innovation of more advanced materials and methods for this pedagogical purpose. Second, it raises an awareness of differences in persuasive writing across languages and cultures, worth noting for developing cross-cultural understanding and communication strategies for effective intercultural business interactions in the dynamic business environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

General Abbreviations

<b>NT</b>	Non-Thais (native English speakers)
<b>TH</b>	Thais

Abbreviation in Chapter 4

<b>AMEX</b>	American Express (Thai) staff
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Abbreviations in Chapter 7

<b>NTI</b>	Letters of invitation written by native English speakers
<b>NTR</b>	Letters of request written by native English speakers
<b>NTS</b>	Letters of sales promotion written by native English speakers
<b>THI</b>	Letters of invitation written by Thais
<b>THR</b>	Letters of request written by Thais
<b>THS</b>	Letters of sales promotion written by Thais

Abbreviations in Chapter 8

<b>TXINT</b>	An American textbook sample of invitation letter
<b>TXRNT</b>	An American textbook sample of request letter
<b>TXSNT</b>	An American textbook sample of sales promotion letter
<b>TXITH</b>	A Thai textbook sample of invitation letter
<b>TXRTH</b>	A Thai textbook sample of request letter
<b>TXSTH</b>	A Thai textbook sample of sales promotion letter



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and to the memory of my father and grandmother.*

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my original work and has not been submitted for any higher degree in another university.

The papers listed below were written and presented at academic conferences in the United Kingdom and abroad during the period of the preparation of this thesis. Content from these papers has been adapted for use in the thesis.

Chakorn, O-O. 'A Cross-Cultural Sales Promotion Analysis'. *Poster Presentation at the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference*. University of Cambridge, September 2000.

Chakorn, O-O. 'Exploring Contrastive Rhetoric in Cross-Cultural Sales Promotion Letters'. *Paper presented at the International Linguistic Association (ILA) 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference*. New York University, USA, March 2001.

Chakorn, O-O. 'Contrastive Rhetoric in Written Business Discourse in the Thai Business Context: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Letters of Request'. *Paper presented at BAAL 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference*. University of Reading, September 2001.

Chakorn, O-O. 'Contrastive Rhetoric in Written Business Discourse in the Thai Business Context: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Sales Promotion Letters'. *Paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Centro di Ricerca sui Linguaggi Specialistici (CERLIS) Conference on 'Conflict and Negotiation in the Language of Specialized Texts'*. University of Bergamo, Italy, October 2001,

Chakorn, O-O. 'Contrastive Rhetoric of Written Business Requests'. *Paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Contrastive Linguistics Conference (ICLC)*. Faculty of Philology, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, October 2001.

Chakorn, O-O. 'English Request Writing in the Thai Business Context'. *Paper presented at the International Conference on "Discourse, Communication and the Enterprise"*. Centre for English Studies, University of Lisbon, Portugal, October 2001.

Chakorn, O-O. 'Professional Invitations in the Thai Business Context: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Letters of Invitation'. *Paper presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Association for Business Communication (ABC) European Convention on "Business Communication across Contexts, Cultures and Continents"*. Aarhus School of Business, Denmark. May 2002.



## INTRODUCTION

The growing number of multinational corporations and joint ventures in Thailand indicates the increasing use of English as the main medium of communication. Nowadays, business correspondence written in English is extensively used in the Thai business context. However, little research has been done in this area. The present research attempts to shed light on the rhetoric of English persuasive correspondence – sales promotion, request, and invitation – in the Thai business context.

This thesis contains nine chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of Business English in Thailand, which provides some socio-economic background and statistics related to the Thai business environment, and an introduction to the Thai education system especially English language teaching in school and workplace. The general review of literature is presented in Chapter 2. It outlines the main theories and disciplines adopted in this research, and discusses previous research on cultural and cross-cultural business discourse with a focus on written business discourse, especially on sales promotion, request and invitation letters. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology employed in the study. It provides the statement of purpose, scope of study, research questions, and description of the data.

The analysis of authentic sales promotion, request, and invitation letters is presented in Chapters 4-6 respectively. Chapter 4 concerns a move-based analysis of sales promotion letters, in which the findings report on the move structures, functions, and linguistic realisations. In Chapter 5, a corpus of request letters is analysed, and emphasis is made to the functions and linguistic realisations of three main structural elements – pre-requests, requests and post-requests. Chapter 6 reports on the findings based on a move analysis of invitation letters including their rhetorical patterns and linguistic realisations of invitation messages in particular.

Chapter 7 examines cross-cultural variations between the Thai and western ways of writing the three types of persuasive correspondence in terms of their politeness strategies and rhetorical appeals. Chapter 8 examines the extent to which samples of persuasive letters in one American and two Thai textbooks on Business English writing represent the authentic corpus used in real business transactions. The findings from Chapter 4-7 are compared to the findings derived from an investigation into the textbook materials. This chapter also reports on common lexico-grammatical errors found in my corpus as well as some findings on the use of salutations and complimentary closes. Chapter 9 is a concluding chapter which provides a summary of the main findings in relation to the research questions, and presents implications of the findings as well as recommendations for further research.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **THE ROLE OF BUSINESS ENGLISH IN THAILAND**

This introductory chapter aims to give some background information relating to the role of English in Thailand especially in the Thai business context. The first section reviews the status of English as the language of international business. The second section is an overview of the use of Thai and English in the Thai business context. The third section introduces the Thai education system and its implications for English language teaching while the last section gives some background to Business English teaching and the Thai workplace.

### **1.1 English as the Language of International Business**

The global spread of English can be regarded as one of the most significant linguistic phenomena in the world. In 1994 Pennycook (1994:7) reported that the total number of speakers of English was between 700 million and one billion. This includes native speakers of English, speakers of English as a second (or intranational) language, and speakers of English as a foreign (or international) language. Three years later Crystal (1997:5) suggested that ‘nearly a quarter of the world’s population is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is steadily growing – in the late 1990s, that means between 1.2 and 1.5 billion people’. These estimates are supported by Graddol’s (1997) study which, based on Crystal (1997), gave the statistics of 1.5 billion speakers consisting of 375 million L1, 375 million L2, and 750 million EFL speakers. (see Figure 4 in Graddol 1997:10) Graddol (1999:61-66) further estimates that the number of L1 speakers will rise to 433 million and that of L2 speakers will total 1.2 billion in 2050. Two main factors for the present-day world status of English have been British colonialism and American economic supremacy. (Crystal 1997;



Graddol 1997; Pennycook 1994; Phillipson 1992; Brumfit 1982) In his study of English for international communication, Brumfit (1982:1) states,

The predominance of English is mainly the result of two periods of world domination by English speaking countries: British imperialism in the nineteenth century, and the economic influence of the United States in the twentieth century.

It is evident that the successive promotion of English by Britain and the United States through political influence, economic power and technological superiority together with the global forces searching for a single *lingua franca* or common language for cross-cultural communication have strengthened the status of English as an international language. Perhaps the third factor that encourages the use of English in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is economic globalisation. Graddol (1997:28-35) describes a new order for the world economy in which English has become and will continue to be the major business *lingua franca* as it is used extensively by the world's 'Big Three' trading blocs – North America, the European Union and Japan, which dominate world trade.

How has English become the language of international business? The answer can be traced back to the colonial era when English was introduced to many colonial states not only for political purposes but also for business purposes. Kachru and Quirk (1981:xvi) point out that 'The outstanding factor in extending the use of English has undoubtedly been the political power and influence of the English-speaking nations and the superiority they attained in various fields of commerce'. The status of English as the dominant medium for commerce has been strengthened over time by the boom of world trade which has led to the establishment of a large number of international economic organisations such as the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). According to Crystal (1997:79), English plays an official or

working role in the proceedings of the EU, the ASEAN, the Commonwealth, the Council of Europe, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and it is the only working language of the European Free Trade Association and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Nowadays, in the ‘shrinking’ world of advanced information technology, English also dominates as the means of modern communication; namely, the Internet, e-mail systems and various computer programming languages and information transfer protocols, which are of tremendous use in the local and international business worlds. Two frequently quoted statistics are that English is the medium for eighty per cent of the world’s electronically stored information, and that three-quarters of the world’s mail is written in English. (Crystal 1997:105; Crystal 1987:358; McCrum et al. 1986:20) The free trade and Information Technology Age have led to the so-called ‘world without boundaries’ where most nations are sharing one common language in their cross-cultural communication – the English language.

Many researchers whose interest is either in the global use of English such as Kachru (1983), Platt et al. (1984), McCrum et al. (1986), Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1994), Crystal (1997), Graddol (1997), or in the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) such as Robinson (1980), Inman (1985), Schleppegrell and Royster (1990), Ellis and Johnson (1994), Yli-Jokipii (1996), and Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), have expressed a similar point of view that one of the most important roles of English is as the language of international business for cross-cultural business communication.

Inman (1985) carried out research on language and cross-cultural training in American multinational corporations. The findings indicated that over 70 per cent of respondents to a survey of 124 corporations which provide language training to their U.S. and non-U.S. personnel reported that English is their primary language for



business communication in their day-to-day operations both locally and abroad. Barbara et al. (1996) conducted a survey of how English is used for various communication purposes in the Brazilian business setting. The results of their 214 completed questionnaires reveal that in addition to the Portuguese language, which is the official language in Brazil, 72 per cent of the Brazilian organisations use English to conduct their business operations either internally or externally. The types of documents widely written in English include *proposals*, *prospectuses*, *reports* and *project plans* because ‘these documents are particularly meant for external communication, which often requires the use of an international language’. (ibid:69) Among very few studies on Business English in Thailand, Kanchanasathit (1980) reports on the use of English in business dealings. She carried out a survey with heads of divisions and departments in 190 companies in Thailand, and reported that the employees were required to have good English communication skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation in order to be successful in their business careers. Thus it is evident that in this Globalisation Age, besides its principal role in diplomacy, popular culture, science and technology, English has a significant role as the language of international business, which is not only used in multinational companies but also in local companies in English- and non-English speaking countries.

## **1.2 The Use of Thai and English in the Thai Business Context**

Thailand, sometimes known by the old name of *Siam*, has always been an independent country. It is the only country in Southeast Asia which has never been colonised. The country has one national and official language, Thai, which is spoken only in Thailand. According to Hudak’s (1990:29) study of the Thai language, Thai belongs to the Tai language family which is a subgroup of the Kudaï or Kam-Tai family. Smyth (1987:252), in his article on Thai, states that Thai is a tonal language,



with the meaning of each syllable being determined by the pitch at which it is pronounced. ‘It is a non-inflected language and much of the lexicon is monosyllabic; polysyllabic words do exist, although the majority of these are foreign borrowings, particularly from the classical Indian languages, Sanskrit and Pali’. (ibid:252) The lexical influence from ancient Sanskrit and Pali is commonly known. Hudak (1990:30) confirms this fact, and adds, ‘*These Indic loanwords comprise a large portion of the technical vocabularies for science, government, education, religion and literature*’. This is perhaps similar to the influence of Latin on English lexis.

In addition to Standard Thai taught and used in schools nationwide, dialects are spoken in North, South and Northeastern parts of Thailand. However, there is only one Thai writing system, which was created by King Ramkhamhaeng in late thirteenth century. Hudak (1990:36) states, ‘The Thai writing system uses as a base an Indic alphabet originally designed to represent the sounds of Sanskrit’. He further explains the creation process as follows:

Borrowing the alphabet then in use by the Khmers, Ramkhamhaeng kept the symbols for the Sanskrit sounds not found in Thai and used them in Indic loanwords to reflect the origin of their pronunciation. For Thai sounds not accommodated by the alphabet, he created new symbols, including those for tones. Because of the redesigning of the symbols to fit Khmer first and then to fit Thai, the eventual system created by Ramkhamhaeng had little resemblance to the Sanskrit originals. (ibid:36-37)

In general, Thais are proud of their language because it represents their independence and cultural identity. Thai students are taught to love their mother tongue and use it correctly and appropriately. Even though English has been of increasing importance, the preservation of the Thai language has always been a priority of the Thai authority. For instance, the importance of the Thai language was emphasized in the speech of King Rama V given to four of his children who were about to travel to Europe for further education in the nineteenth century as follows,

I would like to remind you that my intention to send you abroad is based on academic grounds. Linguistically, you are bound not only to learn English, but also to practice your Thai regularly. Do not forget your mother tongue which you will always use when you come back. It is unacceptable if you can not use appropriate Thai, both spoken and written. It is considered useless if you know English or other foreign languages without being able to translate into Thai or apply to the Thai context. (Wisetsombut 1998:9)

King Rama IX, the present king, once said, 'Thailand is fortunate to have its own, unique language. It is our precious treasure which every Thai national has the responsibility to cherish.' (ibid:12) His view was supported by General Prem Tinasulanond, a statesman, who announced in an academic conference, 'To preserve the Thai language is the duty of every Thai person because it is one of the most precious national heritages of our kingdom. This is a duty of all Thais regardless of their age, gender, status and profession.' (ibid:20) It can be said that at the same time as English has flourished as the main language for international communication especially in the Thai business and diplomatic contexts, the importance of Thai has always been maintained. The government declared in the mid 1990s that 29 July is the Thai Language Day. It may be noted that most Thais do not perceive English as a threat to Thai because its widespread use is still limited among scholars, diplomats, business people, and students, most of whom generally prefer to master their English for academic and/or business purposes while using Thai extensively in their social context.

It was during the colonial era in the nineteenth century that English was formally introduced in Thailand for diplomatic and business-related purposes. Initially, it was learned within a small, limited circle of diplomats, aristocrats and members of the royal family who were involved in national security and foreign affairs both diplomatic and commercial. Later as English has gradually played an increasingly significant role as an international language especially for international business communication, English language teaching has become more widespread, especially after Thailand opened its doors to world trade, which has led to its rapid and



continuous economic growth. Thus it is useful to examine the Thai economic environment since it has a significant implication for the increasing use of English in the Thai business context nowadays. In order to do so, I have summarised three main business and economic factors that, in my opinion, influence the use of English for business communication in Thailand; namely, (1) foreign trade and investment, (2) the growing variety of export products, and (3) international cooperation. It should be noted that the data which will later be used in my analyses involves these factors both directly and indirectly.

### **1.2.1 Foreign Trade and Investment**

During the past few decades, Thailand has been one of the fastest developing countries in Southeast Asia. Since the first *National Economic and Social Development Plan* was introduced in early 1960s, the Thai economy has grown enormously. According to the Thai Board of Investment (BOI) newsletter (October 1999), foreign investment, exports, and tourism have been the main stimulators of continuous economic growth. There are a number of public agencies that have been established to deal specifically with foreign trade affairs. The major agencies are:

#### *1. The Office of the Board of Investment (BOI)*

The BOI is the principal public agency that offers incentives and provides promotion activities to stimulate investment, both in Thailand and abroad. Its services include provision of investment information, a matchmaker program that puts foreign businessmen in contact with local prospective joint-venture partners, arrangement for the necessary permits and licenses, and a wide variety of investment publications. (see [www.boi.go.th](http://www.boi.go.th) for more information)

#### *2. The Department of Foreign Trade (DFT)*

As a public agency under the Thai Ministry of Commerce, the DFT is responsible for general foreign trade affairs and the protection of commercial rights and

benefits. Its important objectives are to enhance Thai overseas trade, to alleviate the problem of trade imbalance, to increase the bargaining/negotiation power and to diversify types of exports and create new export markets. (see also [www.dft.moc.go.th](http://www.dft.moc.go.th)) In addition, the DFT supervises the import and export of restricted products such as antiques and certain types of plants and animals.

### 3. *The Department of Export Promotion (DEP)*

The DEP was established under the Ministry of Commerce to promote "Made in Thailand" products in the international market as well as to assist local manufacturers, exporters and foreign buyers in their business dealings. According to the official DEP's website [www.thaitrade.com](http://www.thaitrade.com), it has a worldwide network of Thai Trade Centres in five major regions: North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, Indochina, and the Middle East. Their overseas services include introducing foreign buyers to appropriate Thai manufacturers/exporters, arranging business trips to Thailand for interested importers and giving them post-purchase support. The DEP also provides the same services through the Office of Commercial Affairs of the Royal Thai Embassy in all major cities around the world.

### 4. *The Export-Import Bank of Thailand (EXIM Bank)*

The EXIM Bank is a non-profit state institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance. Its main purpose is to provide financial support for export activities and investment for export purposes. The EXIM Bank aims to support small, new exporters who are overlooked by private commercial banks. Its financial activities are similar to commercial banks except that it can not accept deposit from the public. (see [www.exim.go.th](http://www.exim.go.th) for more information)

As for the private sector, at present there are 18 bilateral chambers of commerce including the Australia-Thai, Thai-Canadian, New Zealand-Thai, South Africa-Thai, French-Thai, German-Thai, Italian-Thai, Belgian/Luxembourg-Thai, Thai-Swedish, Thai-Norwegian, Danish-Thai, Netherlands-Thai, Singapore-Thai, Thai-Israel, Thai-Chinese, Indian-Thai, Philippine-Thai, Thai-Korea Chambers of Commerce. And there are also 4 self-supporting foreign chambers of commerce: British, American, Chinese and Japanese.



According to investment statistics from the BOI (as of February 2000), in 1999 foreign investment accounted for 81.16% of the total investment in Thailand, leaving pure Thai investment at only 18.83%. The foreign investment figures show an increase of 8.38% compared to 1998 when foreign investment was 72.78% of the total investment. In addition, there are a large number of joint-venture projects between local Thai investors and foreign partners with foreign capital of at least 10%. For example, in 1998 there were 223 British companies in Thailand. (*source*: British Embassy, July 1998) , and in 1999 there were approximately 70 British manufacturers who wanted to start doing business with Thailand. (*source*: the Thai Office of Commercial Affairs, London) The following table shows the number and the value of foreign investment projects from major countries as approved by the BOI in 1999:

**Table 1.1: Investment statistics: foreign investment projects**

Country	No. of Projects	Total Investment (million baht)*
ASIA		
Japan	188	27,042
Taiwan	86	7,910
Hong Kong	25	1,899
Korea	19	981
Singapore	52	7,003
China	7	560
Malaysia	27	3,418
Indonesia	5	1,149
Philippines	1	72
India	6	1,374
NORTH AMERICA		
USA	53	46,351
Canada	3	26,002
AUSTRALASIA		
Australia	10	1,177
EUROPE		
UK	17	3,919
Germany	12	1,868
Switzerland	10	3,170
France	11	2,829
Belgium	7	858
Italy	3	106
Netherlands	18	22,481

*Source: BOI investment statistics (as of February 2000)*

\*Approximately 60 baht (Thai currency) = 1 pound sterling

According to the above statistics, all four continents are responsible for significant foreign investment. The following table summarises the top ten countries with the highest value of investment and number of projects:

**Table 1.2: Top ten countries in terms of foreign investment in 1999**

Rank	Country with highest value of Investment	Country with the highest number of projects
1	USA	Japan
2	Japan	Taiwan
3	Canada	USA
4	Netherlands	Singapore
5	Taiwan	Malaysia
6	Singapore	Hong Kong
7	UK	Korea
8	Malaysia	Netherlands
9	Switzerland	UK
10	France	Germany

It is evident that the main sources of foreign investments in Thailand include a number of English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Moreover, a large number of foreign projects are financed by a few neighbouring countries which have English as one of their official languages, such as Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Thus English is certainly the main medium of communication. Even with non English-speaking countries like Japan, Taiwan, the Netherlands, Korea, Germany and France, it is likely that English is used for business and commercial dealings. In support of this claim, it is noted that my corpus of written business correspondence collected from various Thai offices includes a number of letters and faxes written in English from Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Germany, Switzerland and France in addition to the correspondence from English-speaking countries. Moreover, according to the BOI data (as of February 2000), the major foreign investments are for electric and electronic products, chemical and paper, metal products and machinery, light industries and textiles, all of which are likely to require at least some English technical knowledge for business operations.



### 1.2.2 Variety of Export Products

The ongoing expansion of foreign investment in general has changed Thailand's export structure. In the past, Thailand only exported agricultural products such as rice, corn, wheat, tapioca, rubber, fruit and vegetables. Today, according to the BOI data (as of February 2000), Thailand is a major exporter of computers and parts, textiles, gems and jewelry, electronic and automotive products, in addition to agricultural products. The leading public agencies such as the BOI, the DFT, the DEP and the EXIM Bank (see 1.2.1) have greatly contributed in promoting Thai exports in the world market. According to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC) fact sheet (1999), Thailand imports capital goods, consumer goods, fuels, raw materials and food from Japan, USA, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Germany, China, South Korea, Oman and Australia. It is noticeable that many of these countries have topped the list of highest foreign investment in Thailand. In 1999, Thailand enjoyed a trade surplus since its export value was 9.5% higher than its import value. 'For the first 10 months, export value totalled \$46 billion, an increase of 5.5% from the same period in 1998. Imports over the period totalled \$38 billion, up by 12.9%. The trade surplus and healthy revenue from tourism helped Thailand post an average current account surplus of about \$1 billion per month throughout 1999.' (*Bangkok Post* 1999 Year-end Economic Review, January 4, 2000:7)

The Bangkok Post also reports that 82% of the Thai exports are manufactured goods and 14% are agricultural products and fisheries. It reveals that a number of export products rose between January and September 1999 when compared to the same period in 1998; for instance, vehicles and parts (up 63.8%), motor generator (up 49.3%), furniture and parts (up 24.5%), electric circuits (up 21.9%), gems and jewelry (up 8.7%) and computer and parts (up 5.2%). (*Bangkok Post* 1999 Year-end Economic Review, January 4, 2000:24) The following table and pie chart show Thailand's major export destinations in 1999:



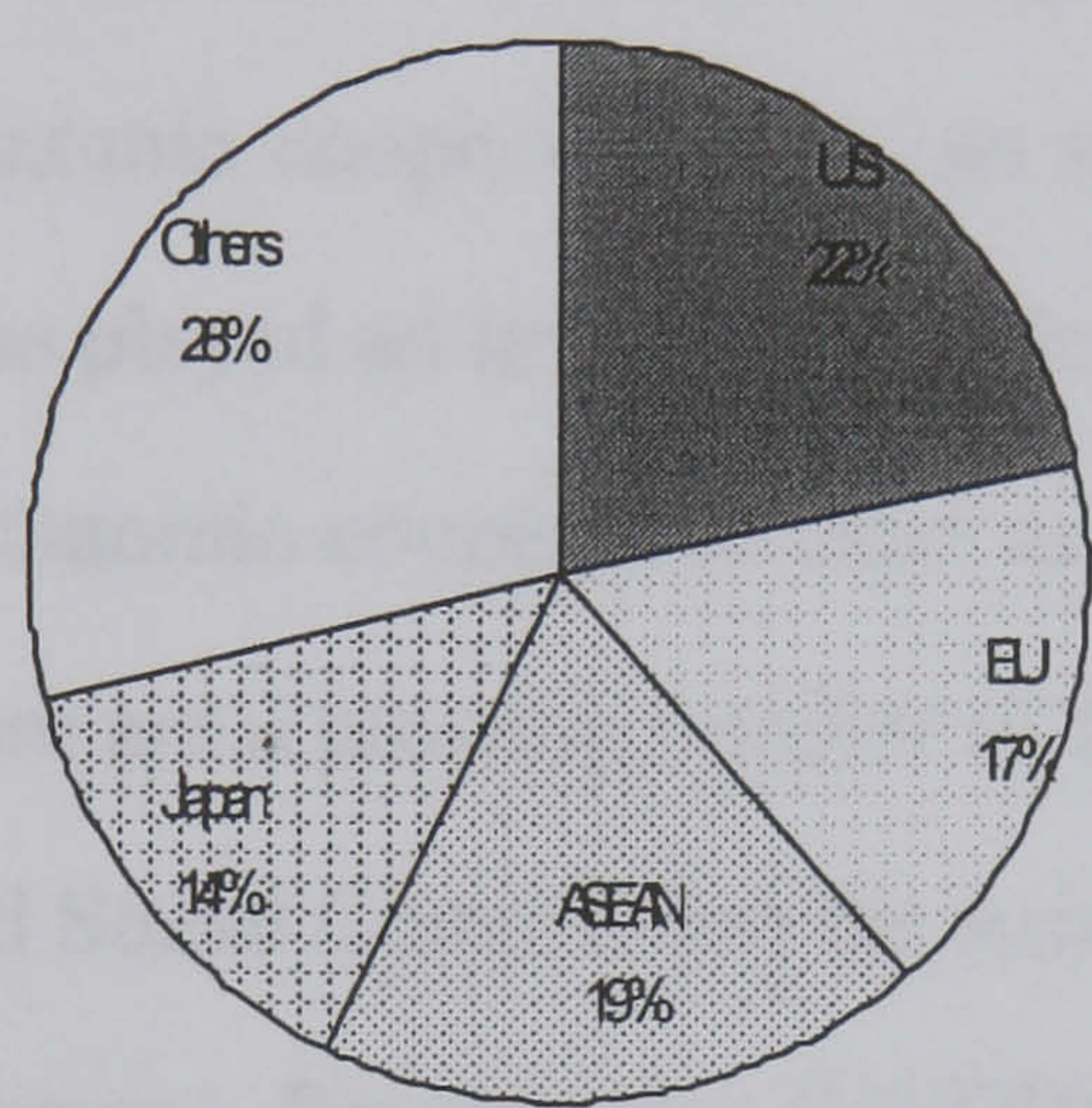
Table 1.3: Thailand’s major export destinations in 1999

Unit: US\$ million

Export Country	Export Value in 1999*
US	9,201
EU	7,134
ASEAN	7,849
Japan	5,950
Others	12,190
Total	42,323

\*Note: January to September 1999

Figure 1.1: Proportion of Thailand’s major export destinations in 1999



(Bangkok Post 1999 Year-end Economic Review, January 4, 2000:23)

According to the APEC’s fact sheet (1999), the main export destinations are the United States, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, China, Taiwan and Germany. A great deal of business contact with foreign countries, many of which are English-speaking countries, has enhanced the use of English in Thailand especially in the business community. In addition, the recent boom of the Internet has opened Thailand’s window of opportunity to compete in the world of ‘e-commerce’. There are a large number of websites on import-export opportunities and doing business in Thailand written in English for purely business purposes such as <http://www.thaimarket.net>, [www.thailandexportguide.com](http://www.thailandexportguide.com), [www.thaitrade.com](http://www.thaitrade.com), [www.thaiecommerce.net](http://www.thaiecommerce.net), and [www.business-in-thailand.com](http://www.business-in-thailand.com). (source: search engine Yahoo! Inc. in [http://www.dir.yahoo.com/Business\\_and\\_Economy](http://www.dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy)) With a wider



variety of export products, Thailand attracts more and foreign buyers and investors, and thus inevitably comes the era when English is an essential requirement in the business world.

### **1.2.3 International Cooperation**

International cooperation in Thailand can be generally divided into two main types: economic and academic cooperation. In this Globalisation Era, with the boom of free trade, economic cooperation is common practice for more efficient international trade. As mentioned earlier in Section 1.1, there are a large number of international organisations for regional economic cooperation. As an active member of ASEAN, APEC and AFTA, Thailand has played an important role in the world trade arena, and thus has gained interest and economic cooperation from many international economic organisations. As a result, there are a growing number of foreign offices in Thailand, for example, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Labor Organisation (ILO), and European Commission (EC). English is, of course, the language of cross-cultural communication in those offices both internally and externally. It is widely known that local Thai staff there are required to have a good command of spoken and written English.

Academic cooperation in Thailand has flourished partly as another benefit of being an active member of reputable international organisations such as ASEAN, APEC and AFTA. There are a number of institutes and organisations which have been established in Thailand by ASEAN, for example, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and ASEAN University Network (AUN). As for language education, Thailand is also an active member of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), a Singapore-based organisation renowned for raising public awareness of

the role of the English language in Southeast Asian region through a series of conferences, language forums, seminars and publications. The educational development in Thailand over the past few decades has led to an ongoing growth of higher education. The country has close academic relations with many leading institutions abroad, such as in Singapore, Japan, Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany. As a result, it has received continuous academic collaboration and cooperation in the form of research funding, scholarships, international conferences and seminars as well as exchange of students, lecturers and experts in many fields of study. Undoubtedly, the correspondence used between Thai and those foreign institutions is mainly in English, so are some other means of communication such as telephone conversations, e-mails and face-to-face interactions in conferences and seminars.

So far the main factors that influence the use of English in Thailand have been explored for a better understanding of how English is becoming important in this non-English speaking country. Foreign trade and investment have led to the increasing number of multinational corporations, foreign companies and joint ventures. These organisations are economically beneficial because they create employment. According to the BOI fact sheet (as of February 16, 2000), the foreign investment projects approved by the BOI in January to June 1999 have created a total of 131,751 new jobs consisting of 129,221 Thai employees and 2,530 foreign employees. It is common practice for the multinational corporations and foreign companies to recruit some employees overseas mainly from their own countries. Although this accounts for only 2% of the total employment (as of January to June 1999, *source*: BOI as above), it can be noted that there is an increasing number of expatriates working in Thailand. These expatriates have encouraged the use of English in the workplace, and, as a result, have formed an English-speaking community. This social community, along with an influx of foreign tourists due to the boom of the Thai tourist industry, has enhanced the spread of English both inside and outside the



workplace. As for the business environment, nowadays the majority of white-collar jobs require a good command of English.

To explore this further, I conducted a quantitative survey of job advertisements in two major Thai and English newspapers: Krungthep Durakij and the Bangkok Post, during the period of one month from 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2000. Krungthep Durakij is one of the leading Thai newspapers specialising in business and economics, and the Bangkok Post is an English-medium newspaper well-known for its accuracy and reliability. Both newspapers target a similar audience, including businessmen, academics and advanced students. The Bangkok Post’s audience also includes expatriates and non-Thai readers in general. This survey is aimed at finding the frequency of jobs advertised which require prospective applicants to have a knowledge of English. My survey method involved counting both the total number of all job advertisements and the number of job advertisements that required English. The results of the quantitative survey are summarised in the following tables:

**Table 1.4: Bangkok Post survey**

Survey Period	Total Job Ads (written in English only)	Total Job Ads that state English knowledge requirement
1 <sup>st</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> January 2000	2,602	2,232
Percentage of total job ads that state English knowledge requirement	=	85.85%

**Table 1.5: Krungthep Durakij survey**

Survey Period	Total Job Ads (5,503)		Total Job Ads that state English knowledge requirement (3,856)	
	in Thai	in English	in Thai	in English
1 <sup>st</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> January 2000	2,114	3,389	1,010	2,845
Percentage	38.40%	61.60%	47.77%	83.94%
Percentage of total job ads that state English knowledge requirement	=		70.07%	

There are two main features that are worth noting. Firstly, even in the Thai newspaper, most job advertisements are written in English. According to my survey, in Krungthep Durakij, 61.60% of the job advertisements are written in English. This implies that its target group is people with at least a reading knowledge of English. Moreover, its Thai job advertisements, which accounts for 38.40%, tend to present the job titles in both Thai and English. Secondly, the findings also reveal that 85.85% of the job advertisements in the Bangkok Post and 70.07% of those in Krungthep Durakij actually state in their job description that the prospective applicants are required to know English. The levels of English required in those job advertisements vary from ‘basic’ English to ‘excellent’ command of English in both spoken and written form. The samples of their wording are, for example, for basic English: *‘read and write simple English’*, *‘reasonable spoken and written English’*, *‘be able to handle English correspondence’*, *‘a working knowledge of English’*, and for good to excellent English: *‘good command of spoken and written English’* (most frequently found), *‘fluent in spoken, read [sic.] and written English’*, *‘English proficiency is a must’*, *‘excellent command of English’*, *‘fluency in all aspects of the English language’*. In Krungthep Durakij, 47.77% of the Thai job advertisements also indicate in Thai that knowledge of English is required. In sum, this survey shows that the demand for employees with English proficiency is particularly high in the job market in Thailand nowadays.

The next section will focus on how the Thai education system supports the dynamic socio-economic structure which has powerfully enhanced the use of English in the Thai business context.



### **1.3 The Education System in Thailand and Its Implications for English Language Teaching**

According to the Office of the National Education Commission (1997), the educational management in Thailand is under the mandate of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Education is in charge of the current education system, known as the 6-3-3 schooling system; that is, six years of primary education, three years of lower secondary education (junior high school), and three years of upper secondary education (high school). As for pre-school education, children may spend two to three years in a private kindergarten or elementary school before they start primary school. In the past, only primary education was compulsory for all Thai students. At present, since the 1996 educational policy, Thai students are legally entitled to study for three more years to complete lower secondary education. However, up until now a large number of students especially in the rural areas tend to terminate their education after they finish their six-year primary education.

In her article on the language education policy, Wongsothorn (1999:54) states, ‘The need for more language learning especially English has become more apparent as Thailand is stepping into the information super highway, forming and pushing towards the ever-encroaching future’. An international report on language education by Dickson and Cumming (1996), cited in Graddol (1997:52), reveals that the supply and uptake of English in Thailand is increasing. Generally, English is introduced in the fifth year of primary school. Thus, most Thai students begin to learn English when they are ten to twelve years of age. According to Wongsothorn (1999:55), a revised foreign language education policy, which was passed by the Cabinet on 19 December 1995, proposed that:

- 1) English should be a compulsory subject starting from the first year of primary education,
- 2) Primary and lower secondary students would be able to choose one more foreign language, and
- 3) Upper secondary students would be able to freely choose to study foreign languages.

‘The Policy also gives the status of English as the first foreign language starting from primary schools while other foreign languages can be added to the curriculum, one language at the lower secondary level and more at the upper secondary level.’ (ibid:56)

Although this policy has not yet come into full effect, it shows an awareness of the increasingly important role of English language education in Thailand. In primary and lower secondary school, Thai students are required to study English approximately four hours per week. When they are in upper secondary school, the period of study varies from four to eight hours a week according to their program of study. Students in science and mathematics programs spend less time studying English than students in language programs do. The latter can choose to learn one more foreign language including French, German and Japanese as well. It should be noted, however, that English language teaching in Thailand is largely grammar-based and focuses on form rather than function.

In his recent feature article in *The Guardian Weekly*, Todd (2001), who teaches at King Mongkut’s University of Technology in Bangkok, reports on the current Thai educational reforms, one aspect of which is the English language teaching. He states, ‘Thailand is driven by a desire to reclaim its “tiger economy” status lost in the Asian slump of the late 1990s. This time, though, it wants to build on firmer foundations. Priority has been given to raising education standards and in particular English language skills’. (ibid:1) He supports my claim by reporting that the teaching of English in Thailand is grammar-based whereby the lessons consist largely of



recitation and translation. He also reports on the increasing number of English-medium schools, which suggests the growth of the ELT market in Thailand:

In the 1990s the number of English-medium schools in Thailand jumped from four to 23 in five years. There has also been similar growth in the number of English-medium programmes at private secondary schools. Although English is spoken widely only in Bangkok and the main tourist resorts – and even in these places it's still very much a foreign language – middle-class parents see English as a prerequisite for academic success at tertiary level and access to well-paid jobs for their children. (ibid:1)

As for the higher education, 'The duration for tertiary education is from four to six years at a bachelor's degree level depending on the fields of specialization; approximately two years for a master's degree and at least three more years for a doctorate degree.' (Ministry of University Affairs 1995:10) The higher education system offers different English language courses which depend on the students' fields of study. In the governmental universities, English is likely to be an optional course for undergraduate students. There might be two or three compulsory English courses in the first and second years. Only students who major in English language or English literature study English extensively during their four-year undergraduate study. Approximately 40% of the universities in Thailand belong to the government and the students have to pass the entrance examination in order to enter those universities. The remaining 60% are private universities where tuition fees are much more expensive.

According to Tansiri (1996), 70% of the Thai students study in governmental universities whereas only 30% go to private universities. At present, most universities have realized the increasing importance of English and developed various kinds of programs that use English as the medium of instruction. This supports Graddol's (1997:45) claim that one of the most significant educational trends worldwide is the teaching of a growing number of tertiary courses through the medium of English. Some private universities such as Assumption University in Bangkok are using

English as the main medium of instruction. Many private and governmental colleges and universities have recently developed more academic courses taught in English, especially in the field of business administration, science and technology, which are generally known as ‘international programs’. ‘At present, both Thai public and private universities offer altogether 356 international programs using English as the medium of instruction both at undergraduate and graduate levels, i.e. 122 undergraduate programs in 70 areas of study in 24 universities; 176 master’s degree programs in 112 areas of study in 21 universities; and 58 doctoral degree programs in 32 areas of study in 12 universities.’ (source: Ministry of University Affairs’ official website: [www.inter.mua.go.th/program/index.html](http://www.inter.mua.go.th/program/index.html)) This reflects the high demand for English language teaching and learning in Thailand.

Pongsurapipat (1984) stated that at a tertiary level, universities and colleges in Thailand regard English as a tool for acquiring advanced knowledge. This may have been true at the time. However, more recently, according to Tansiri (1996), the new educational policy has indicated the general aim of English language teaching, that is, to enable students to use English in academic and/or professional context as the need arises. It is noticeable that the trend towards the use of English has expanded to the professional context due to an increasing need for Thai people to use English for occupational purposes, especially in the business context. As education plays an important role in the nation’s growth, economic and social development, it is believed that better knowledge of English by Thai people is essential for Thailand in achieving its ultimate goals of overall national development in this ‘globalised’ world of information technology.

## **1.4 Business English Teaching and the Thai Workplace**

Of all the three main groups of users of English; namely, native speakers of English, speakers of English as a second language, and speakers of English as a foreign



language, Pennycook (1994:8) states that the last group is clearly the fastest growing section of the world speakers of English. Thais belong to this group and English is their first foreign language in schooling. Nowadays they have to know English in order to communicate in the international community especially in the international business context. Over the past few decades, there has been an increasing amount of business correspondence written in English for external and internal communication both locally and abroad. The hospitality sector, especially hotels and travel agents, now uses English extensively in its written business correspondence, even with the local Thai customers. The multinational credit card companies such as American Express and Diners' Club always send out letters written and signed in English by Thai local staff (with guidance from native speakers of English) to their Thai customers. This may sound incredible, but it is true, and a large number of letters in my corpus come from the above-mentioned sources.

Moreover, many big companies have started to use English in all in-house communications, for example, Alphatec Group, a Thai-owned semiconductor and telecommunications company with over 25 joint ventures abroad, and Ogilvy & Mather, a British-owned multinational advertising agency. In those companies, the internal memos and most business letters, reports, proposals and faxes are written in English. Most staff are required to speak English in most meetings and telephone conversations with English-speaking firm personnel and clients. Some mid-management personnel have to perform business presentations and negotiations in English and use e-mail and the Internet for their business communication. The demand for Business English in Thailand, however, may not be as strong as in Korea. Song's (2000:38) article called 'Lingua Future' in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reveals the importance of English in the Korean business context: 'Fearful of falling behind Japan and English-speaking Asian countries, many economists and academics are advocating the adoption of English as an official second language, arguing it's crucial for boosting economic growth and the nation's competitiveness in an

increasingly globalized world.’ Song (2000) reports that an on-line survey conducted by a leading Korean newspaper, the Donga Ilbo, reveals that 63% of the respondents favour making English an official language although there are some major concerns that in doing so, Korea might lose its cultural identity.

In Thailand, there is no movement pushing English as an official or second language yet. Nevertheless, Business English is booming as there have been a large number of enrolments on Business English courses offered by many universities and colleges. A variety of these courses are for undergraduate study designed to match the job market, for example, English for Business and Technology (The University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce), English for Communication (Ramkhamhaeng University, Burapa University, and Krirk University), English for Business and Industry (King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology), English for International Communication (Saint John’s College and Rajamangala Institute of Technology), English for Business Communication (Sripathum University and Siam University), and Business English (Assumption University and Kasem Bandit University). There are also a large number of private language schools that offer various English language courses including English for business purposes. It is said that enrolments on Business English courses at well-known language schools such as the British Council and the American University Alumni (AUA) are far too many for those schools to accommodate all applicants, thus selective placement tests are commonplace in the application process.

A number of private companies and public agencies in Thailand realise the importance of Business English and provide some courses for their local staff or send them to evening or weekend classes to help them develop sufficient English proficiency necessary to meet their job responsibilities. Chulalongkorn University’s Language Institute and the School of Language and Communication at the National Institute of Development Institution (NIDA) have, for many years, been arranging



Business English classes for employees from various offices such as Thai Airways, Unilever Group, Siam Cement, the Bank of Thailand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Board of Investment of Thailand (BOI). Another example is Arthur Anderson & Co. (AA & Co.). This large multinational accounting firm with offices in 48 countries including Thailand supported a survey report conducted by Schleppegrell and Royster (1990) to evaluate the performance of language schools that offer English courses for business professionals in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. This survey was aimed to identify contractors which could provide high-quality English instruction in the cities where AA & Co. has offices because 'AA & Co. has adopted a common language policy that affirms its commitment to providing ELT for its personnel and outlines the English skills they are expected to develop and maintain during the various stages of their professional careers'. (Schleppegrell and Royster 1990:3)

Ellis and Johnson (1994) have pointed out that in the last two decades, Business English has attracted increasingly ongoing interest and awareness of people around the world. According to St John (1996), 21 out of 24 new books in the field of ESP published by six major EFL/ESP publishers in the United Kingdom in 1994 were in the area of English for business purposes. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:2) state, 'Within ESP the largest sector for published materials is now that of Business English, and there is burgeoning interest from teachers, publishers and companies in this area.' With the boom of Business English nowadays, it is useful to consider what is taught in most Business English materials. St John (1996:15) notes,

Business English is a materials-led movement rather than a research-led movement. There are a number of advantages of this situation: the textbooks that have been produced clearly draw on valuable experience and good teaching practice; they are well presented thereby inspiring confidence in the professionalism of the course and its teachers, a key factor with business people; they also exhibit a good feel for what will work in a teaching situation and provide a variety of activities for classroom use or self-access work.



Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) state that until recently, Business English has been an experience-, intuition- and materials-led movement. They report that Business English research findings have been slow to emerge and feed into practice. It is generally agreed that the amount of research in written business discourse is relatively and surprisingly small, and that more research needs to be done. (Bhatia 1993; Ghadessy 1993; Yli-Jokipii 1994; Connor 1996; Hiranburana 1996; St John 1996; Dudley-Evans and St John 1998) This field of research relating to the Thai business context is even rarer. This thesis is in response to the above call for more genre-specific research on written discourse. It focuses on contrastive rhetoric of English persuasive correspondence written by Thais and native English speakers.

The term ‘cross-cultural’ is used in the thesis as the data analysed are from two cultures – Thai and western. The term ‘intercultural’ is not adopted here because, according to the Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning (edited by Byram 2000:295), ‘IC<sup>1</sup> denotes a peculiar communication situation: the varied language and discourse strategies people from different cultural backgrounds use in direct, face-to-face situations’. ‘Intercultural’ is mainly used to refer to spoken discourse across cultures (e.g. in business meetings). This thesis presents contrastive analyses of written discourse, so I chose to use the term ‘cross-cultural’, following other studies in a similar vein (e.g. Yli-Jokipii 1994; Connor 1996). My research aims to give insights into cross-cultural strategies for communicative effectiveness and innovation in the development of advanced materials in Business English teaching across cultures.

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<sup>1</sup> Intercultural Communication

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (Kramsch 1993:1)

Cross-cultural communication undoubtedly involves how to convey messages across linguistic and cultural boundaries. A 'bridge to understanding' between language and culture is essential for exploring a new balance between 'local' and 'global' communication amidst the language and cultural diversity. Research into this field is particularly useful for language teaching and learning in both academic and professional contexts. The cross-cultural study of discourse has made significant advances in the past few decades, emerging generally from the theories of text and discourse analysis, register and genre analysis, rhetoric as well as pragmatics. In this chapter, I will describe some theoretical insights into the discipline of contrastive rhetoric which provides guidance, both directly and indirectly, to the cross-cultural study of discourse in various aspects. The review of literature on contrastive rhetoric, especially genre-specific contrastive text linguistics, will be presented in the first part. Then, in the second part, I will review existing research into cultural and cross-cultural business discourse in both spoken and written genres, especially into written business discourse. The highlight is on research into letters of sales promotion, request and invitation, which is the main focus of the present research.

#### 2.1 Contrastive Rhetoric

In the 1960s, when the first large influx of international students in the colleges and universities of Western Europe and the United States was at a



flood, teachers of the language of instruction and particularly of English, noted that these students did not write in the way that was expected. What the students wrote was not necessarily wrong, but it was different. Among the first people to examine this phenomenon was Robert Kaplan, who coined the term *contrastive rhetoric* to describe these differences (Kaplan 1966, cited in Purves 1988:9)

In his article '*Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education*', Kaplan (1966) presented his pioneering research on paragraph organisation in English essays written by ESL students from Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. This research was based on his observation as a teacher that the English texts written by ESL students were different from those written by native English speakers in terms of the rhetorical level beyond the syntactic level. His contrastive analysis suggested that the transfer of the rhetorical conventions of students' first language to their second language writing was common. He first pointed out the import of rhetoric in cross-cultural communication. With his well-known accompanying diagrams, Kaplan claimed that logic and rhetoric are culturally specific. Although his article and controversial diagrams of *cultural thought patterns* received much criticism (see, for example, Raimes 1991; Mohan and Au-Yeung Lo 1985; Matalene 1985; Hinds 1983), Kaplan (1966) successfully introduced the discipline of contrastive rhetoric into the field of applied linguistics. It may be noted that Kaplan's continuing research (see especially 1966, 1972, 1983a, 1983b, 1987, 1988) on contrastive rhetoric has paved the way for the development of various sub-disciplines of contrastive rhetoric nowadays.

The theories used in contrastive rhetoric can be traced back to the growth of discourse analysis since the 1960s when linguists and applied linguists began to focus their attention on the studies of text and discourse structure of their languages. The dominance is, of course, the English language, with the seminal work of Austin (1962) on speech act theory; Searle (1975) on indirect speech acts; Halliday (1978, 1985, 1994) in systematic functional linguistics; Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1989) on coherence and cohesion in English texts; Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) on



transactional discourse analysis; and Brown and Levinson (1987) on politeness strategies.

Connor's (1996) landmark book called *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects of Second-Language Writing* provides an extensive outline of the background and trends in the contemporary discipline of contrastive rhetoric. In this book, the term 'second language writing' refers to writing by non-native English speakers, which includes ESL and EFL writers. Based on Kaplan's concept of contrastive rhetoric, Connor (1996) believes that language and writing are cultural phenomena, and explains the discipline of contrastive rhetoric by taking into account various influential theories; namely, applied linguistics, linguistic relativity, rhetoric, text linguistics, discourse types and genres, literacy and translation. She points out that 'instead of spending its energies on syntactic issues in writing, contrastive rhetoric moved ahead to compare discourse structures across cultures and genres'. (ibid:15) As a discipline, it is pragmatically oriented rather than theoretically oriented. Kaplan (1988:277) stated that contrastive rhetoric had its origin in pedagogical necessity. He explained that contrastive rhetoric supported the teaching of writing and reading by encouraging attention to the following issues:

- knowledge of the morphosyntax of the target language, not at the sentential but at the intersentential level;
- knowledge of the writing conventions of the target language both in the sense of frequency and distribution of types and in the sense of text appearance;
- knowledge of audience characteristics and audience expectations in the target culture; and
- knowledge of the subject under discussion. (ibid:293)

Connor (1996) broadened the scope of contrastive rhetoric. Her so-called newly defined contrastive rhetoric covers both linguistic and pedagogical issues:

Contrastive rhetoric in the context of applied linguistics is taking new directions in five domains: contrastive text linguistics (comparison of

discourse features across languages); the study of writing as a cultural activity (comparing the process of learning to write in different cultures); contrastive studies of the classroom dynamics of L2 writing; contrastive rhetoric studies conducted in a variety of genres in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes (e.g. journal articles, school essays, and business reports); and contrastive rhetoric studies dealing with the inculcation of culturally different intellectual traditions and ideologies. (ibid:19)

From this comprehensive notion, it is interesting that contrastive rhetoric tends to have a multidisciplinary approach, combining various cross-cultural aspects of applied linguistics and the teaching of writing. Similar to Connor's (1996) concept, in his article 'Why We Need Contrastive Rhetoric', Enkvist (1997:188) considers contrastive rhetoric as the study of patterns of text and discourse in different languages that vary in structure and in cultural background. He states, 'One of the hot subjects in today's linguistics is the field variously known as contrastive (or cross-cultural or inter-cultural) rhetoric (or, with varying emphases, text linguistics, discourse linguistics, discourse analysis, or pragmalinguistics).' (ibid:188) His views support Connor's (1996) newly defined contrastive rhetoric, especially contrastive text linguistics. Of all Connor's (1996) five domains or sub-disciplines of contrastive rhetoric mentioned earlier, two principal sub-disciplines: *contrastive text linguistics* and *genre-specific contrastive rhetoric studies*, are worth exploring in detail as they are somewhat interrelated and relevant to the present research. Although contrastive rhetoric may be realised in speech or writing, this thesis falls in particularly with the tradition often attributed to Kaplan of examining written texts.

'A text in Halliday's terminology is a chunk of language that is actually spoken or written for the purposes of communication by real people in actual circumstances.' (Bloor and Bloor 1995:4) Connor (1996) explains that contrastive text linguistic studies examine, compare and contrast how texts are formed and interpreted in different languages and cultures using methods of written discourse analysis. She states that contrastive text linguistics was influenced by the three most important schools of thought in text linguistics; namely, *the Prague school of linguistics*,



*systemic linguistics*, and the *new school of discourse analysis*. The Prague school of linguistics introduces ‘functional sentence perspective’ or the study of ‘theme’ and ‘rheme’ concerning the pattern of information flow in sentences and the relation of the pattern to text coherence. Systemic linguistics involves Halliday’s (1971; 1973; 1978) concept of context of situation, Halliday and Hasan’s (1973) theory of cohesion, and Martin’s (1993) study of register, genre and ideology. According to Connor (1996:82), the new school of discourse analysis is ‘characterised by an interdisciplinary emphasis in which psychological and educational theories have equal status with linguistic theories’, i.e. the work of Nils Enkvist in Finland, psycholinguist Teun van Dijk in the Netherlands, applied linguist John Hinds in the United States, and linguist Robert de Beaugrande in Austria and the United States. These schools of thought have paved way for the current growth of contrastive text linguistics studies.

It is evident that early contrastive rhetoric studies were mainly a combination of contrastive text linguistics (comparing discourse features across languages), and the study of writing as a cultural activity (comparing the process of learning to write in different cultures). This trend probably follows Kaplan’s (1966) pioneering research on the organisation of paragraphs in ESL student essays, which was originated from pedagogical concerns. Later, in the 1980s, a more genre-specific variety of studies in contrastive rhetoric emerged and became a topic of interest among applied linguists, educational researchers and practitioners around the world. This explains my earlier observation that *contrastive text linguistics* and *genre-specific contrastive rhetoric studies* are interrelated. Following Connor (1996:91), existing contrastive rhetoric studies with a text linguistic emphasis can be divided into three major categories: paragraph development, discourse development, and metadiscourse. Her survey of these studies involves two types of data: (1) research on student writing (2) research on “accomplished” writing or writing done for academic or other professional purposes. (ibid:90) The latter type can be regarded as ‘genre-specific contrastive text



linguistics’. The following tables are drawn from her survey to show the dynamic scope and development of contrastive rhetoric:

Table 2.1: Contrastive text linguistic studies of student writing

Concept	Text analysis	Reference	Language		Genre
			L1	L2	
Paragraph development	- Topic sentence	Evenson (1987)		EFL (L1 = Norwegian)	Expository essay
	- Topic sentence	Ingberg (1987)		EFL (L1 = Swedish)	Expository essay
	- Topic sentence	Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988)	Thai		Argumentative essay
Discourse development	- “Story graph”	Söter (1988)	English	EFL (L1 = Arabic, Vietnamese)	Expository essay
	- Discourse bloc; T-unit	Ostler (1987)	English	EFL (L1 = Arabic)	Expository essay
	- Orientation	Scarcella (1984)	English	EFL (L1 = Japanese, Korean, Romance, Taiwanese)	Expository essay
	- Coherence	Connor and McCagg (1983)	English	EFL (L1 = Japanese, Spanish)	Paraphrases of reading passages
	- Cohesion	Reid (1992)	English	EFL (L1 = Arabic, Chinese, Spanish)	Expository essay
	- Coherence, topical structure analysis; argumentative structure	Connor and Lauer (1988)	English (England, New Zealand, USA)		Argumentative essay
	- Cohesion; narrative structure; clause functions	Indrasuta (1988)	Thai; English		Narrative essay
	- Metadiscoursal devices	Crismore et al. (1993)	English; Finnish		Argumentative essay
(Connor 1996:92)					

Table 2.2: Contrastive text linguistic studies of “accomplished” texts

Concept	Text analysis	Reference	Language		Genre
			L1	L2	
Discourse development	- Coherence; <i>ki-sho-ten-ketsu</i> pattern	Hinds (1983a)	Japanese, English		Expository newspaper article
	- Reader/writer responsibility; <i>ki-sho-ten-ketsu</i> pattern	Hinds (1987)	Japanese		Expository newspaper article
	- Paragraph organisation; induction vs. deduction	Hinds (1990)	Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai		Expository newspaper article

	- Coherence; <i>ki-sung-chon-kyui</i> pattern	Eggington (1987)	Korean		Academic articles
	- Coherence; linearity	Clyne (1987)	German, English		Academic articles
	-Argument structure	Connor (1988)	English	EFL (L1 = Japanese)	Business correspondence
	- Cohesion	Mauranen (1992)	English, Finnish	EFL (L1 = Finnish)	Medical journal articles
	- Cohesion; thematic development;	Ventola & Mauranen (1991)	English, Finnish	EFL (L1 = Finnish)	Scientific journal articles
Metadiscourse	- Metadiscoursal devices	Mauranen (1993)	English	EFL (L1 = Finnish)	Economic articles

(Connor 1996:98)

As my research is mainly based on genre-specific professional writing in the Thai context, following on from the above tables, I will focus attention on selected relevant pieces of the above-mentioned studies especially in the Thai-related issues and “accomplished” texts. According to Connor (1996), the most influential studies of contrastive text linguistics are the work of John Hinds. (see especially 1983, 1987, 1990) He has conducted a number of studies that contrasted text or discourse patterns and coherence initially between Japanese and English, and, later, including different languages such as Chinese, Korean and Thai. His early contrastive research is among the first studies of contrastive text linguistics that analysed genre-specific “accomplished” texts in different languages and cultures; namely, expository newspaper articles, in addition to ESL student essays.

### 2.1.1 Contrastive Thai-English Rhetoric Studies

In his 1990 article ‘Inductive, Deductive, Quasi-inductive: Expository Writing in Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai’, Hinds (1990) uses examples of expository texts written in the four languages (though translated into English for analysis) to support his claims against the native English speakers’ typical assumption that text organisational patterns consist of either inductive or deductive writing. These expository texts are mainly newspaper articles and film reviews. Hinds states,



A dichotomy is often drawn between writing that is organized in an inductive manner and writing that is organized deductively. Inductive writing is characterized as having the thesis statement in the final position whereas deductive writing has the thesis statement in the initial position. It is arguably the case that any society with a literary tradition is capable of producing expository texts that contain either inductive or deductive reasoning or some combination of the two. English, for example, allows either type of development, although the model that expository writers apparently aim for and that students are consistently taught tends to be deductive rather than inductive. (ibid:89)

He describes how writing in Japanese, Korean, Chinese and Thai follows a different organisational pattern, which is neither inductive nor deductive. The examples of essays in the four languages reveal a common writing style (although it is not the only style in those languages), which Hinds (1990:98) calls a '*delayed introduction of purpose*' or '*quasi-inductive*' writing in which the topic or thesis statement is often found or implied in the passage. He argues that 'This delayed introduction of purpose has the undesirable effect of making the essay appear incoherent to the English-speaking reader, although the style does not have this effect on the native reader.' (ibid:98) The quasi-inductive style, according to Hinds, aims to stimulate the reader to think for themselves and to draw their own conclusions. He implies that this cultural-specific style of text organisation should be taken into consideration in order to help native speakers of English to better understand written texts across cultures.

I maintain that when English-speaking readers recognize that a composition is not organized deductively, they categorize the composition as inductive, thus preventing them from understanding the true differences between competent English writing and competent writing in other languages. I claim that the dichotomy between inductive and deductive writing is not a valid parameter for evaluating texts across languages. (ibid:90)

In this article, little has been discussed about Thai writing. Compared with Japanese, Korean and Chinese, Hinds (1990:97) says, 'Thai writing, in general, appears to conform more closely to the canons of English expository writing, although repetition is more frequent.' He does not discuss the two Thai essays, which appear only in the appendix, but comments that the purpose of the second essay, a film review, is made

at the end of the article instead of the beginning. This perhaps confirms his claim about the quasi-inductive writing style. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, there is no further related study regarding this issue. I will later test Hinds' hypothesis on the quasi-inductive style or the 'delayed introduction of purpose' in Thai expository writing with the English persuasive letters written by Thais. (see Chapters 5 and 6) As a native Thai speaker, I think Hinds' hypothesis makes a point in the Thai case because Thais normally prefer to highlight their main ideas later in their writing after introducing an issue or a story. This is perhaps a norm or tradition of typical Thai oral and written story telling.

In his study, Hinds focuses his attention on Japanese writing. He discusses three Japanese essays and reveals that all main ideas or topic sentences are presented in the final paragraphs. He says that it is difficult for native English speakers to predict where the article is going at any point before the final paragraph while Japanese speakers do not have this problem due to their cultural expectations. This can refer back to his 1987 study of Japanese-English contrasts in which he claims that Japanese writing is 'reader-responsible' whereas English writing is 'writer-responsible'. Hinds (1987) analyses Japanese and American newspaper articles and points out the issue of interpretative responsibility of the reader and writer, which suggests that Japanese requires more reader's interpretative responsibility while English requires more writer's responsibility. In other words, Hinds' (1987, 1990) studies imply coherence in text, in which the writer needs to understand different expectations of readers and writers across cultures.

Two other studies in contrastive text linguistics between Thai and English extensively involve student writing. Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988) provide a descriptive study of reflective student writing in English and Thai. They examine 90 high school students' essays on the same topic, consisting of 50 Thai essays written by Thai students and 40 English essays written by American students. They explore the



content of each essay in terms of the themes, the attitudes towards the texts, and the structure of the essays. The findings suggest that the English essays tend to be more personal in that the American students use more personal pronouns, slang and informal vocabulary that is normally associated with speech rather than writing. Both types of essays, in general, have their topic sentence, but 'one major difference between the English and Thai compositions is the nature of the material given in support of the topic sentence. The English writers all accept the terms used in the task description as given information, not needing elaboration or clarification. Nearly all the Thai writers, however, devote significant space to defining terms.' (ibid:170) Moreover, their conclusion styles are different. Most English conclusions are firmer and often in speculative counterfactual form, whereas most Thai conclusions seem to simply restate the main points already mentioned in the body text. This seems to match Hinds' (1990) observation that repetition is frequent in Thai writing. Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988) emphasise the fact that the Thai essays tend to be impersonal and formal, while most English essays are very personal, with a conversational tone and much speech-like vocabulary. They conclude,

These facts suggest that the Thai students may share a more sharply defined model of a reflective essay than do the students working in English, or they develop such a model at an earlier point in their training. It may also be that Thai speakers, attuned to levels of usage by the sociolinguistic constraints with which they live, come to be aware of the distinction between spoken and written forms at an earlier point and apply this to their writing. (ibid:174)

Indrasuta (1988) analyses 90 narrative essays written by two groups of high school students in two languages and two cultures. Both groups of 60 Thai and American students share common characteristics; namely, similar age (16-17 years old), family and educational background. Her corpus consists of 30 English essays by American students (AM), 30 Thai essays by Thai students (TH), and 30 English essays by the same group of Thai students (TT). Apart from comparing the discourse patterns and styles of English and Thai essays under the same topic, she also examines the narrative essays under a new topic (to avoid the likely problem of translation) in order

to see whether the Thai students transfer the pattern of writing from the Thai language into their English writing.

In this study, three main methods of analysis are used: a linguistic analysis of cohesion ties (Halliday and Hasan 1976) in terms of reference, substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesion; an analysis of narrative structure (plot, conflict, setting, theme, character, scene, and figurative language); and an analysis of clause functions (generalization, comment, action, mental state, dialogue, description of action, description of mental state, description of character, description of setting, and description of thing). The findings reveal linguistic, stylistic and rhetorical differences, which, according to Indrasuta (1988), seem to be influenced by cultural factors rather than linguistic factors. The AM and TT groups differ in the use of the cohesion tie 'reference': the AM group has a higher use of reference whereas the TT group has a low use of it since the article 'the' does not exist in Thai. Moreover, 'the use of nouns instead of pronouns according to the degree of formality shows transfer of Thai conventional style into writing in English.' (ibid:221)

The analysis of narrative structure shows that the AM group uses more implicit themes than do the TH and TT groups. As for the stylistic difference, 'the Thai students used more highly figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, and personification, because analogy appears to be the preferred way of describing things in Thai.' (ibid:219) She explains that in the Thai culture, narratives are significant means for instruction and exposition. The last analysis of clause functions shows that the Thai students in both TH and TT groups use more mental state verbs and descriptions of mental states (expressing how they feel or think) while the American students prefer actions rather than mental states. This study reveals that the TH and TT groups share common characteristics, which may be called 'the Thai conventional model of narrative' while the AM group follows another model. Indrasuta (1988:222) concludes, 'The similarities of the TT and TH groups in many ways imply that as



Thai students write in L2, they bring with them the appropriateness of language use and the conventional rhetorical style in their first language because the students at this age have steadily been encultured in their own culture.'

The above-mentioned studies have revealed some differences between Thai and English writing. Bickner and Peyasantiwong's (1988) and Indrasuta's (1988) studies seem to contradict each other in terms of the degree of formality. Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988) state that the Thai reflective essays tend to be impersonal and formal; on the other hand, Indrasuta (1988) reports on the extensive use of mental state verbs and descriptions of mental states (expressing how they feel or think) in the narrative essays written in both Thai and English by Thai students, which seems more personal and less formal. Although my research is on another written genre, it is interesting to consider the degree of formality and expression of personal feelings or solidarity in persuasive correspondence written by Thais and non-Thais, especially native English speakers, which can be included in the study of politeness strategies. In addition, the issues of 'quasi-inductive' (delayed introduction of purpose), repetition, figurative language and import of L1 rhetorical writing style are worth exploring in terms of business communication. These assumptions will later be taken into consideration in my analyses of written business discourse in the Thai business context.

According to Connor (1996), the diversity of genres is one of the most significant changes of the trends in contrastive rhetoric. Apart from students' essays (expository, narrative, argumentative), different genre-specific text types have been explored; namely, newspaper articles, academic journal articles (medical, scientific, economic), and business correspondence. However, she states, 'Despite the enhanced research activity on genre-specific writing cross-culturally, only a few isolated studies have examined each genre. More studies need to be conducted.' (ibid:149) A similar view expressing the lack of cross-cultural professional writing is shared by Bhatia

1993; Ghadessy 1993; Yli-Jokipii 1994; Hiranburana 1996; St John 1996; Dudley-Evans & St John 1998. The next section will examine the available research on cultural and cross-cultural business discourse in the light of the development in Business English teaching across cultures.

## **2.2 Research on Cultural and Cross-Cultural Business Discourse**

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:30) state, ‘Cross-cultural communication requires awareness and sensitivity to the diversity of values and customs around the world’. Research into cultural and cross-cultural business discourse, both spoken and written, has been conducted for better business communication, although on a small scale compared to other fields of study within the English language teaching context. The review of such research is presented in two sections: spoken business discourse and written business discourse. As the main focus of the present research is on written business discourse, related studies especially sub-genres of business correspondence will be discussed in detail.

### **2.2.1 Spoken Business Discourse**

Mitchell’s (1957/1975) analysis of the language of buying and selling in Cyrenaica, the United Kingdom of Libya, is believed to be the first analysis of spoken business discourse. Her analysis shows the transactional stages in buying-selling transactions which are classified into *Salutation*, *Enquiry as to the object of sale*, *Investigation of the object of sale*, *Bargaining*, and *Conclusion* (ibid:1975:178). Hasan (1977) has examined the stages in appointment making and identified them into the following transactional stages: *Greeting*, *Query*, *Identification*, *Application*, *Offer*, *Confirmation*, *Documentation*, *Summary*, and *Finis*. Halliday and Hasan (1989) further develop the concept of generic structure potential, an early theory of genre



analysis, by analysing the language of buying and selling in English. Their findings reveal that there are obligatory elements such as SR (sales request), SC (sales compliance), S (sale), P (purchase) and PC (purchase closure); and optional elements such as G (greeting), SI (sales initiation), SE (sales enquiry) and F (finis).

Dow (1989) carries out an analysis of features of spoken discourse in a simulated business negotiation in English between two pairs of Austrian students of Business English and one pair of Austrian marketing professionals. His purpose is to compare and evaluate the students' negotiation performance with that of the marketing specialists in the light of improving teaching materials for English business negotiations in Austria. The results reveal that the students' negotiations lack appreciation of ritual interchange such as invitations and compliments, and show insensitive use of tactical threats such as over-aggression and over-compliancy. A more recent work is Charles' (1996) investigation of the organisation and rhetoric of sales negotiations using a methodology that draws on both discourse analysis and business studies of negotiation. The data - authentic British negotiations - is divided into two categories, New Relationship Negotiations (NRNs) and Old Relationship Negotiations (ORNs). Charles (1996) analyses the three layers in a negotiation: *superstructural* (overall business relationship context where the negotiation takes place), *macrostructural* (business negotiation itself), and *microstructural* (discourse within the negotiation), and builds the IDE framework (*Initiation-Development-Ending*) for her analysis of the differing roles of Buyers and Sellers in the negotiation event. She concludes that different types of behaviour would seem to be in operation in negotiations: *status-bound behaviour*, *enactment of roles*, and *personal level behaviour*, although the emphasis in a NRN is on relationship while that in an ORN is on companies. She also looks at various strategies for saving professional face (with reference to Brown and Levinson 1987), for example, the Face Threatening Act (FTA), the concepts of *Professional Face*, *FTA to Professional Face*, and *Tactical (Professional Face-Saving) Strategies*. Her findings from the comparison

between NRNs and ORNs reveal that the NRN-ORN dichotomy is reflected in a variety of ways in the discourse. 'Differences between the two groups were discernible in the kind of topics initiated, the rhetorical moves produced, and, above all, in the face-saving strategies used.' (Charles 1996:33)

It seems that most analyses of spoken business discourse mainly concern one particular context (e.g. the above-mentioned studies on Austrian and British business negotiations by Dow (1989) and Charles (1996) respectively). The cross-cultural studies of spoken business discourse are few and far between. So far I have found four analyses on interactional discourse strategies, intercultural business telephone conversations, cross-cultural business requests and meetings. Micheau and Billmyer (1987) explores the discourse strategies used by native speakers in a case discussion at a graduate business school and compares them to those used by non-native speakers in a similar setting. The findings include the differences in turn-taking in the non-native speaker discourse, such as violations of turn-taking (e.g. interruptions with violative attempts to take the floor during another speaker's turn) and discrepancies in turn allocation strategies (e.g. reluctance to bid or self-select, long pauses after a nomination, and misinterpretation of a nomination). They state the implication of their research findings as follows: 'These findings serve as an empirical base for the design of a special component in an ESP course for foreign business students'. (ibid:87) Halmari's (1993) study of intercultural business telephone conversations between Finns and Anglo-Americans reveals that the Finnish telephone conversation style tends to be non-topical, and includes lightening elements such as a joke after greeting. The light non-business elements are common for the Finns, but are not appreciated by their American counterparts.

Mulholland (1997) explores the nature of spoken business requests in the West represented by the Australian business context, and the East represented by the Japanese, Korean and South Vietnamese contexts. With thirty authentic face-to-face



events recorded as data, her study focuses on the acts of making, hearing and acknowledging requests with an aim to find the differences in important cultural assumptions which can cause misunderstanding and disruption in the communication process. She reports that the Eastern representatives showed less separation between the professional and the private since the inclusion of emotional or family matters often occurs in the Asian business interaction, which made it difficult for the Australian businessmen to understand. Silence is also another cultural assumption which, according to Mulholland (1997), is considered as acceptable in the Asian context but unfamiliar in the Australian context. She suggests that silence from Asian listeners after a request should not always be taken as resistance because they need time to translate what they hear and to decide how to respond in an appropriate way. She concludes that the formulating of requests is a delicate and often risky issue even within one culture and that the understanding of cultural assumptions is important in cross-cultural business communication.

Rogerson-Revell (1999) analyses the language of business meetings by audio-recording four internal management-level meetings conducted in English in a large international airline corporation based in Hong Kong over a period of one month. She states, 'Three of the four meetings are 'intercultural', in that there is a combination of 'native' (British, Irish, Australian, American, Canadian) and 'non-native' (Hong Kong Chinese, Singaporean, Malaysian, Indian) speakers of English.' (ibid:57) All meetings aimed at routine reporting and problem-solving within specific functional areas of the airline business. The participants knew one another and were accustomed to the meeting procedure. One of the main findings of Rogerson-Revell's (1999) study draws on the comparison between the three meetings chaired by native English speakers and the only meeting chaired by a Hong Kong Chinese. In the former, all items on the agenda were discussed and relevant action was apportioned whereas in the latter, after an hour and a half, only the first of seven items on the agenda was discussed. Rogerson-Revell (1999) reports that the meeting chaired by this non-

native English speaker was less formal and much more loosely structured than the other three. She points out, 'Furthermore, although the chair starts off as verbally the most dominant speaker; he is quickly overtaken by three native English-speaking males of similar organisational rank, until he finally loses speakership and topic control.' (ibid:60) Her study relates interaction-based sociolinguistic research to Business English training practice by outlining some stylistic variations and the underlying interactive strategies used particularly in intercultural business meetings.

The four cross-cultural studies above report on the differences of the patterns of business talk between native and non-native speakers of English. It is impracticable to compare those studies since their data and approaches or methodologies are different and somewhat non-equivalent. However, their findings support the idea that cultural factors can influence the discourse patterns and functions. Also Dow's (1989) study, mentioned earlier, implies that the Business English students have not achieved the standard of the real-life language of business as used by business professionals. This may lead to the question of the authenticity and effectiveness of Business English materials, especially textbooks, which, as one of my research purposes, will be explored in Chapter 8. Let us now move on to the main focus of this literature review.

### **2.2.2 Written Business Discourse**

With the globalization of business and other professional communication, writing in such metaprofessional genres as letters, resumes, and job applications for readers with a different language and cultural background than one's own is a reality for more and more people. (Connor 1996:135)

Kaplan (1987:15) states, 'Written language is more likely to provide elaborated information, and that very elaboration is likely to require sequencing, structure, and stance not characteristic of spoken language.' It is true that written discourse tends to be more elaborated than spoken discourse. However, it could be argued that in some



types of spoken language such as transactional business discourse, rhetorical patterns and sequencing are equally important. (see Charles 1996; Halliday and Hasan 1989; Hasan 1977; Mitchell 1957/1975; previously mentioned) There are various modes of written business correspondence such as business letters, faxes, memos, telexes, and e-mails. For better global and cross-cultural business communication, it is necessary to understand the nature of different modes of written business discourse and be aware of the cultural variability that may cause inappropriateness, discrepancies, and even communication breakdowns. This section is divided into two parts: research on written business discourse in English (written only by native English speakers), and research on written business discourse across languages and cultures. The emphasis will be on the latter as the present research focuses on cross-cultural multidisciplinary approach.

#### ***2.2.2.1 Research on Written Business Discourse in English***

Johns (1980), Jablin and Krone (1984), Zak and Dudley-Evans (1986), and Ghadessy (1993), analyse the writing of English business correspondence written by native speakers. Following the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976) on cohesion, Johns (1980) examines three types of business discourse: letters, reports and textbooks, and analyses them in terms of cohesive elements. The findings include differences in the frequency of occurrence of certain cohesive elements, and contributes to the development of Business English teaching. Jablin and Krone (1984) explore the structural and content characteristics of job rejection letters and their effects on job applicants. Zak and Dudley-Evans (1986) investigate word omission and word abbreviation in telexes. Before the days of e-mails, they suggested that their findings could be useful for the teaching of telex writing and for the production of a manual of usage for those who regularly write and send telexes in English.

Following the concept of register analysis introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1989), Ghadessy (1993) analyses business letters which he classifies as ‘replies to...’ (letter

of reply in the reciprocal situation) in terms of structural elements and discourse patterns. From his data of sixty letters, he tries to establish the shared elements of structure. He says, ‘Each letter is considered as an ‘extended turn’ in the CHAIN of communicative events for which a suitable Generic Structure Potential (GSP) is then proposed. It is concluded that the chain-like quality of this type of communication is a function of two obligatory elements, i.e. REFERENCE and CLOSING, found in all the examples under discussion.’ (ibid:4) His main analysis adopts Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) model of classroom interaction examining teacher-student turn-takings known as Initiation-Response or IR Analysis: ‘A typical exchange in the classroom consists of an *initiation* by the teacher, followed by a *response* from the pupil, followed by *feedback*, to the pupil’s response from the teacher.’ (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975:21) Ghadessy then (1993:153) proposes the model for business communication in general as follows:  $I \wedge (\underline{R}/I)_n \wedge \underline{R}$  ‘in which (^) means ‘followed by’, ( ) means ‘optional’, and (n) that there may be more than one  $\underline{R}/I$ .’ According to Ghedessy, the I (Initiation) and R (Response) can be regarded as a ‘turn’ in the communicative event. His findings suggest that apart from the initial letter (the first letter in the reciprocal situation which is not included in his data), the subsequent letters (his 60 letters of reply) share a number of obligatory and optional elements which establish the generic structure potential (GSP) of this discourse genre. These elements are presented below:

IG	(Initial Greetings)	<i>optional</i>
R	(Reference)	<i>obligatory</i>
AI	(Addressing an Issue)	<i>obligatory</i>
C	(Closing)	<i>obligatory</i>
CC	(Complimentary Close)	<i>optional</i>

(ibid:162-3)

It should be noted that Ghadessy (1993) does not differentiate the types of his ‘replies to...’ letters. Based on a broad classification of business correspondence, his findings



are general rather than specific. As this present study does not focus on reply letters, I will not use Ghadessy's (1993) model above in my analysis.

#### ***2.2.2.2 Research on Written Business Discourse Across Languages and Cultures***

Research into cross-cultural written business discourse often examines the theory of genre, the discipline of contrastive rhetoric, and the concept of face and politeness. There are a number of studies on written business correspondence especially business letters and faxes in various sub-genres. As these studies tend to have different types of data and diverse methodologies, it is difficult to group them by their methods of analysis. Their findings are very much data-driven and sometimes report on different aspects of study, which make it extremely complicated to compare and contrast or establish links among the data for comparative critical analysis. These limitations affect the presentation of the following literature review. As an organisational principle, I will present these studies according to the three types of persuasive correspondence which are the main focus of this research, and discuss their methodologies and findings in each type.

#### **1. Letters of Sales Promotion**

Bhatia (1993) introduces a textual analysis of the structure of sales promotion letters using a genre-analytical approach to business texts. He develops a move analysis of sales promotion letters following Swales' (1990) so-called *move-step analysis* of the introductory section in academic articles. (see Appendix B for Swales' model) Similar to Swales' analysis in which the rhetorical pattern of the introductory session in academic articles is identified through moves and steps, Bhatia (1993) identifies the rhetorical pattern of moves in sales promotion letters. He proposes that sales promotion letters have seven moves which consist of three obligatory moves and four optional moves as follows:

Move 1	Establishing credentials	(obligatory)
Move 2	Introducing the offer	(obligatory)
(i)	Offering the product or service	
(ii)	Essential detailing of the offer	
(iii)	Indicating value of the offer	
Move 3	Offering incentives	(optional)
Move 4	Enclosing documents	(optional)
Move 5	Soliciting response	(obligatory)
Move 6	Using pressure tactics	(optional)
Move 7	Ending politely	(optional)

(Bhatia 1993:49)

His data consist of a number of letters written in English from Singaporean companies and Western multinationals. Although only one language is involved, his analysis refers to at least two cultures; namely Singapore and the West. In this study, Bhatia states that sales promotion letters belong to the ‘promotional genre’ as do job application letters. He then compares *product* and *self-advertising* through sales promotion letters and job application letters, and suggests that both types of letters share the same rhetorical pattern of moves. It is important to note that his move realisation is based on ‘strategies’ rather than ‘linguistic features’ used by the writers. His move analysis will later be explored in detail and used as a base for my analysis of the letters of sales promotion from my corpus in Chapter 4, in which linguistic features will be taken into consideration in addition to cross-cultural communicative strategies.

Zhu (2000a, 2000b) studies sales genres in China and reports on some cross-cultural findings in Chinese and English sales letters. Bhatia’s (1993) pattern of moves is taken into account in her research. By combining genre analysis and schema theory, Zhu (2000a) introduces a four-stage process for teaching cross-cultural sales genres through a comparison between two sales letters (one in English, one in Chinese, selected from the corpus of 40 letters) in terms of moves, text structure and politeness behaviour in order to show how different social and cultural contexts can influence



sales letter writing. Her findings will be referred to in Chapter 4 and 7 where relevant. Zhu's (2000b) study combines genre research with a historical approach. Her paper examines the development of sales genres in mainland China in the pre-reform period (1949-78) and the reform period (1978 to present). Six authentic letters from different enterprises are analysed and discussed. They were originally written in Chinese, and have been translated into English. Two of them, which are of the reform period, can be considered as sales promotion letters following Bhatia's (1993) definition. Zhu also looks at their moves and reports that 'The subsequent moves (after salutation) are related to a series of marketing strategies and are quite similar to those discussed by Bhatia (1993) in his analysis of English sales letters.' (Zhu 2000b:166) She does not discuss this issue in detail. However, her findings suggest the similarity in the move pattern between her Chinese letters and Bhatia's (1993) English letters.

It should also be noted that Hiranburana (1996) develops an analysis of sales promotion along similar lines in her unpublished PhD thesis which explores cross-cultural strategies and the use of English in international business correspondence. Her data in this analysis consists of 33 samples of business correspondence written by Thais (TH), native speakers of English (NE), and non-native speakers of English non-Thais (NNENT). Her proposed pattern of moves in sales promotion letters is similar to Bhatia (1993) presented above. Like Zhu (2000b), her findings reveal similarities between the TH, NE and NNENT in terms of moves and steps without any particular differences. This pattern of moves will be presented in Chapter 4 with a discussion on whether it is applicable to my data, and how the findings differ.

## **2. Letters of Request**

Within the discipline of contrastive rhetoric, Jenkins and Hinds (1987) compare the rhetorical structures (form and content) of business letters of request written in American English, French and Japanese, taken from selected textbooks of each

language. They present the recommended formats for American English, French and Japanese business letters as follows:

English:     1. Salutation  
              2. Body  
              3. Complimentary Close (Damerst 1966)

French:       1. Introduction  
              2. Body  
              3. Salutations (Guback 1984)

Japanese:    1. Opening remarks  
              2. Body  
              3. Ending (Kawaguchi 1975)

(Jenkins and Hinds 1987:329)

These above formats are general, and there is no further discussion of each element. Jenkins and Hinds (1987) do not explain the differences between salutation (English), introduction (French) and opening remarks (Japanese). They show how textbooks in those three languages identify similar components of an effective business letter, which suggests that ‘the form of a business letter takes will not differ significantly according to the language in which it is written’ (ibid:329). The main focus of their research is on the orientation of the context of the letter. They report that American business letter writing is reader oriented with an attempt to persuade the reader to appreciate the benefits of doing what the writer wants. French letter writing, on the other hand, is writer oriented with prudence, conciseness and precision. Japanese letters are oriented to the space between the writer and reader through the extensive use of set expressions. According to Jenkins and Hinds (1987), American letters achieve this reader-orientation through the linguistic devices of pronoun use (*you* rather than *I*), avoidance of passive structures and use of direct address and proper names. French letters use a large number of the present conditional (e.g. *de bien vouloir nous faire parvenir...*) and the imperative subjunctive (e.g. *veuillez*). The



nonperson orientation in Japanese letter writing is achieved through the use of honorific language and stock phrases and expressions. It will be interesting to see whether letters of request written in English by Thais adopt any of these orientations and, if so, which linguistic devices are employed. (see Chapter 5)

The concept of orientation is also found in Yli-Jokipii's (1994; 1996) detailed contrastive linguistic study of authentic business letters of request from English, American and Finnish companies. Focusing on the linguistic realisations of requests, her study is based on two languages (English and Finnish), and three cultures (Finnish, British and American). Yli-Jokipii looks at all 'requests' in those letters, and claims that 'requests are frequent message types in business writing and sensitive to situational and interpersonal factors'. (1996:305) Her contrastive analysis matches Jenkins and Hinds' (1987) analysis in that the American letters are reader oriented. According to Yli-Jokipii, British letters are considered to be writer oriented, somewhat similar to French letters in Jenkins and Hinds' (1987) study. Finnish request letters show deferential yet respectful politeness and give an opportunity for the reader to refuse the request. She also introduces the mood analysis of the request formats. Interestingly, of all the four request formats identified (imperative, interrogative, declarative, modal-initial), the declarative mood is the most dominant structural format. Her findings also reveal that the American requests are more explicit than the British ones with a wider use of the imperative form and a performative verb although they show an attempt to create a reader perspective. The Finnish writers avoid using the imperative form, show a reluctance to use 'I' (by using corporate 'we' in the sense of the company instead of the writer as an individual), and tend to address to the name of the reader's company, all of which seem to contrast with the American, and to a lesser extent, British requests.

Mood analysis of request letters is also carried out by Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996). They examine business correspondence containing requests written in English in an Anglo-Italian joint venture. A set of 32 internal and external

correspondence texts written by, and to, the British managing director of this international joint venture is selected for investigation into possible linguistic variations influenced by the interpersonal variables of power, social distance, and in particular, status. They explore the mood, or as they call it the 'modes of realisation of requests', following Yli-Jokipii's (1994) request formats (imperative, interrogative, declarative, modal-initial). Their results confirm Yli-Jokipii's (1994) findings that the declarative mood is the most frequently used in requests. Following Labov and Fanshel's (1977:78) central rule of request, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996:641) summarise a general background of requests in written business communication as follows:

- (1) goal-oriented [need for the action]
- (2) purposeful [need for request]
- (3) subject to power relationships [A has the right, B has the obligation].

They divide the data into 2 sub-categories: *routine correspondence* (repetitive and conventional correspondence in which both addresser and addressee have clear expectations and shared knowledge), and *relational correspondence* (longer and more complex correspondence which sometimes contains more than one request to be dealt with personally). As for the syntactic choice, they summarise all the form-types of request (i.e. *please + imperative, could you, I would be grateful if you would*, etc.). It is found that the relational correspondence uses more variety of request form-types which, according to their suggestion, could result from avoidance of repetition and/or pragmatic reasons. As for the lexical level, they report that,

The range of lexical choice is less varied than syntactic form, from imperatives, mitigated by *please* ('please arrange for the mandate...'), through the performative *suggest*, ('I suggest you enclose a copy...'), to the tentative *perhaps we could* ('perhaps we could do this on Tuesday...') Positive (MAXimisation of support) and negative (MINimisation of imposition) politeness effects are achieved by the use of mitigating lexical items such as, respectively, *please, grateful, appreciate, worthwhile, and would, could, perhaps, may*. (ibid:645)



It is also reported that the use of impersonal pronouns instead of personal pronouns signals the perception of social distance between the addresser (in this case, the managing director) and the addressee (internal staff). On the other hand, social solidarity is marked by the use of a first name, hand-written address and signature. (ibid:645) Then from their data, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) develop a structural representation of written requests consisting of compulsory (C) and optional (O) components as follows:

Address	(C)	
Pre-Request	[alerter (object, reference, etc.) or request supportive move]	(O)
Request(s)	(C)	+ subordinate requests (O)
Post-Request	[emphasis, expansion, thanks]	(O)
Salutations	(O)	
Signature	(C)	(ibid:647)

Compared with what Jenkins and Hinds’ (1987) present as the recommended format of an English business letter consisting of salutation, body and complimentary close (Damerst 1966) mentioned earlier, the above structural representation is much more specific. The term ‘salutation’ refers here to ‘address’. The term ‘body’ can include pre-request, request and post-request whereas the term ‘complimentary close’ refers to ‘salutations’ and ‘signature’ according to Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996). They report that pre-requests and, to a lesser extent, post-requests are found in routine correspondence although the nature of pre-requests is different from that in relational correspondence in that the latter is ‘likely to contain an *alerter*’ (e.g. an object line), rather than a fully-fledged *supportive move*’. (ibid:653)

Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness strategies<sup>1</sup> is explored in the letters of request in Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) and Yeung (1997). According to Yeung (1997:507), Brown and Levinson (1987) postulate three independent variables which have a systematic effect on the choice of politeness strategies: 1) the social distance (D) of the speaker and hearer, 2) the relative power (P) between them, and 3) the absolute ranking (R) of the imposition in the particular culture. Yeung (1997) studies the use of polite requests in English and Chinese business correspondence in Hong Kong to investigate the extent to which the factors of P, D, and R can predict the linguistic choice in English and Chinese requests. Along similar lines, several correspondence texts in English are closely examined by Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) in terms of the writer/reader relationship in order to point out the interpersonal variables of power, social distance, and status.

Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) suggest that there is the interplay of social variables in the verbalisation of written requests, and conclude that 'the subtle relationship between status and power, the former often seen as an emanation of the latter, poses some difficulties in the attribution of mitigated request forms'. (ibid:658) They also claim that power, status, social distance and imposition are not independent variables across a variety of requests, which somewhat questions the well-known model of politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) who view those factors as having an independent effect on linguistic choice of polite expressions. Their investigation into the interpersonal variables of power, social distance and status is very descriptive and well-organised; however, the findings, especially those

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<sup>1</sup> Brown and Levinson (1987) have followed the study of speech acts by observing the *directives*, a type of speech act in which the speaker expresses his/her need of getting the listener to do something. They suggest that this may threaten either the speaker's or the listener's face; and thus develop a system of politeness strategies by taking into account the appropriateness of meaning, social distance, cultural awareness, and so on, to reduce the Face Threatening Act (FTA) which has later become a well-known theory of politeness in discourse analysis worldwide.



concerning how such variables are related to the writer's linguistic variations, are limited in the specific context, and no structural framework has been proposed for the overall analysis of linguistic variations influenced by power, social distance, and status. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996:658) state that, 'further intra- and cross-cultural and cross-linguistic research involving further data is essential in ascertaining to what extent our findings can be generalised to other contexts involving business correspondence'.

The findings of Yeung's (1997) multiple regression analysis reveal that only the factor of imposition (R) in the English data has a statistically significant impact on linguistic choice. The Chinese business correspondence can be divided into 2 styles: Classical Chinese and Modern Standard Chinese. According to Yeung, the former is more deferential although it is not evident that one is inherently more polite than the other. It is interesting that there is no statistical significance of P, D and R, either alone or combined, on the Chinese data. Once again, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model is questioned. Yeung (1997:520) concludes, 'the Chinese appear to have a somewhat different system for the choice of politeness strategies, which is not accurately reflected by the factors postulated by Brown and Levinson'. It may be noted that Yeung's interpretation of the Chinese data is different from Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris' (1996) findings about the English (Anglo-Italian) data discussed above since the Chinese writing style is different. Again, this supports the need for more cross-cultural research into written business discourse.

As for the Thai business context, a number of the letters of request written by Thais and by native English speakers in my corpus will be analysed in order to identify the similarities and differences in terms of orientation, mood, linguistic realisation and politeness strategies.

### 3. Letters of Invitation

Research into letters of invitation is rare. The main literature I found consists of two studies of two specific types of invitation letters: (1) the study of persuasive strategies in English and Chinese letters of invitation to trade fairs by Zhu (2001), and (2) Hiranburana's (1996) move analysis of 'letters of arranging visits and follow-ups' written by Thais, native English speakers, and non-Thai-non-native-English-speakers.

Zhu (2001:3) points out that letters of invitation to trade fairs sent to prospective attendees are prevalent in both English and Chinese business practice. Her data consists of forty authentic letters: twenty were collected from the United States, Australia and New Zealand, and twenty from mainland China. She describes the communicative purposes of each set of letters as follows:

#### English letters

- to invite the reader to attend the Expo, and encourage further contact
- to attract the reader's attention
- to give positive appraisal of the Expo
- to persuade the reader to attend the Expo
- to achieve a positive image

#### Chinese letters

- to invite the reader to attend the Expo, and encourage further contact
- to attract the reader's attention
- to give positive appraisal of the Expo
- to persuade the reader to attend the Expo
- to achieve a positive, collaborative and respectful image
- to build a host-guest relationship with the reader

(Reconstructed from Figure 2 in Zhu 2001:9)

Zhu (2001:9) also provides a move analysis, which reveals eight moves in the content of the letters in her corpus: introducing, inviting, advertising, offering incentives, inviting again, registration details, encouraging further contact, and polite closing. She reports, 'Both the English and the Chinese invitations appear to have very similar moves at the text level except that Chinese letters have an extra move: Move 5, inviting the reader again.' (ibid:12) She relates this move to a Chinese cultural value



of host-guest relationship building by explaining that ‘repeating invitations in Chinese is often seen as demonstrating warmth and hospitality towards the guest’. (ibid:14)

Her findings in terms of persuasive strategies suggest that the English letters tend to stress the appeal to reason while the Chinese letters contain both logical and emotional appeals. Moreover, while the former creates a personal and friendly tone especially through the use of ‘you-orientation’, the latter is more formal in that it extensively uses honorifics to indicate respect and sincerity. The English letters are oriented towards an individualistic image through the use of stress on reason which is realised by ‘having the invitation to the reader to attend the trade fair as the focal communicative goal.’ (ibid:16) Zhu (2001:16) further states, ‘The Chinese letters, while sharing this goal, have the additional purpose of presenting a cooperative image and proffering a long-term relationship, thus meeting the needs of businesses in a collectivistic culture in the midst of economic reform.’

In her PhD thesis, Hiranburana (1996) provides brief move analyses of different types of business letters including ‘letters of arranging visits and follow-ups’. This corpus consists of 18 invitation letters and faxes concerning business visits and appointments and replies written by Thais (TH = 3), native English speakers (NE = 6), and non-native-English-speaker-non-Thais (NNENT = 9). Note that there are only 2 NNENT ‘replies to’ or ‘follow-up’ letters (responding to invitations), which, for some unidentified reasons, are included in this corpus. The move structure of this specific type of invitation letters and follow-ups is as follows:

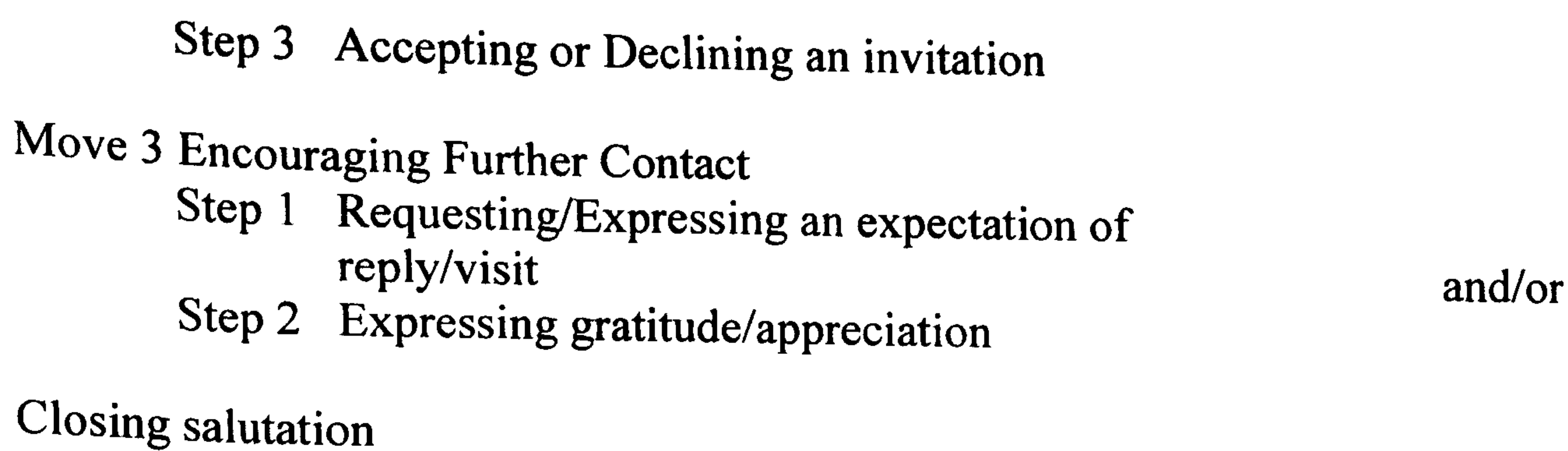
Opening salutation

Move 1 Establishing a Link

- Step 1 Acknowledging the visit message and/or
- Step 2 Referring to previous contact

Move 2 Arranging the Visit

- Step 1 Giving details of the invitation/Requesting/  
Confirming details of the visit and/or
- Step 2 Offering hospitality/Inviting and/or



(Figure 6.32 in Hiranburana 1996:256)

Her findings suggest that TH, NE and NNENT writers tend to follow similar moves and steps in their letters of arranging visits and follow-ups. Note that her analysis is based on a small-scaled corpus, and that her results of the move analysis are not discussed in detail. She reveals that the language used is generally formal and polite, and concludes, ‘Thai business communicators and their NNENT counterparts tended to be influenced by their cultures which are oriented towards smooth, pleasant interpersonal relationships through indirectness and face-saving’. (ibid:258)

My corpus of invitation letters does not contain only letters of trade fair invitations and of arranging visits. However, Zhu’s (2001) findings on persuasive strategies and individualistic/collaborative image, and Hiranburana’s (1996) findings on the Thai cultural orientation to smooth business relationships through indirectness and face-saving will be taken into account in Chapter 7, in which various aspects of cross-cultural variation in the Thai and English persuasive correspondence will be examined.

## 2.3 Research into Persuasion and Politeness Strategies in Written Business Discourse

This section provides some background to a number of theories and concepts relating to persuasion and politeness strategies. They are selectively adopted by Business-English researchers for their analyses of written business discourse. It should be noted that more detailed discussion will be presented in 7.3 and 7.4 where my corpus



is analysed accordingly. This section serves as a prelude describing a brief overview of relevant theories and concepts of persuasion and politeness, and their applications in Business writing research.

The early 1900s was a time of transition and change in the language of business letters, and this period of flux transformed the way we conduct business by mail: We went from the courtly, humble, exaggerated language of the past to a more functional and persuasive use of language. (Powell 1991:33)

Powell's (1991) study analyses the contributions of applied psychologists and early business-English writers to three areas: sales letters and the power of persuasion, the "you" viewpoint, and the "five C's" of business-letter writing. She examines each area from a historical standpoint of language use in American business letters during 1905-1920. According to Powell (1991), Cody's (1906, 1911) books on business letter writing are among the first studies that justify the concept of written business persuasion and the notion of you-orientation in business letters. Cody (1906), cited in Powell (1991:35), provides three criteria for writing an effective sales letter: it must be persuasive, it must employ positive suggestion, and the writer of such a letter should focus on his/her projected reader. According to Powell (1991), Cody's (1911) theory of reader adaptation led to the establishment of the "you" viewpoint (similar to what Jenkins and Hinds (1987) called 'reader-orientation'), whereby the writer communicates from the reader's perspective. Another well-known rule is called the five C's of business-letter writing: (1) clearness, (2) conciseness, (3) completeness, (4) correctness, and (5) courtesy, which 'were first seen in Hotchkiss and Drew's 1916 text, and are found in most business writing textbooks that followed.' (Powell 1991:41) Powell (1991) concludes that the use of power of persuasion, the "you" viewpoint and the five C's initially established in the 1900s have influenced the persuasive writing of contemporary business letters.

Studies on persuasive business correspondence (Zhu 2001; Campbell 1998; Hyland 1998) adopt the concept of rhetoric originated in approximately 335 BC. by Aristotle (1991) who points out three elements of western persuasive rhetoric which influence belief and action: *logos* (reason and evidence), *ethos* (character and claims), and *pathos* (emotion). Zhu (2001) regards these three elements as persuasive strategies whereas Campbell (1998) and Hyland (1998) regard them as rhetorical conventions or appeals of persuasive discourse. Their analyses, mainly within English and Chinese contexts, will be reviewed in 7.4, and comparison will be made to my findings of persuasive letters in my corpus.

With regard to politeness, the best-known work is probably that of Brown and Levinson (1987). Based on Goffman's (1967) notion of 'face', they introduce the concept of face in their study of politeness in speech acts. Brown and Levinson (1987) define 'face' as the public self-image of every member of a society. They claim that everyone has face needs which involve maintenance of another person's face as well as his/her own during an interaction. They contend that any given speech act can potentially threaten the face of either the speaker or hearer, and that the use of politeness strategies is essential for reducing any face-threatening act (FTA). Their theory of politeness has been adopted in numerous studies on both spoken and written discourse although few are in the field of business correspondence. The existing studies in this field are presented below.

Pilegaard (1997) examines politeness strategies in 323 authentic British business letters drawn from a corpus collected by Cambridge University. These letters are divided into three categories: (1) 'making contact' (sales, inquiries, and other letters concerning making or maintaining contact between business counterparts, (2) 'negotiating' (quotations, orders and other letters concerned with certain elements of negotiation), and (3) 'in conflict' (reminders, complaints and other letters on matters about which the parties are in conflict. He comments, 'In business letters, politeness



strategies are used to (1) prepare the ground for the formulation of the letter's main request, (2) redress the face-threatening act of requesting, and (3) round off the letter.' (ibid:241) His main findings report on the sequential realisation of positive politeness strategies (e.g. to claim common ground, focus on cooperation, and/or fulfil the receiver's wants) and negative politeness strategies (e.g. to give freedom of action, minimize imposition, and/or dissociate the sender/receiver from act) found in his corpus. He concludes that 'positive and negative politeness are equally frequent in the early stages of business contact but once negotiation has started, negative politeness dominates.' (ibid:241) Note that Pilegaard (1997) bases his analysis on one particular context (British), and he encourages the use of politeness theory to investigate written texts cross-culturally.

Zhu (2000a) uses this theory to briefly highlight some Chinese (as opposed to English) politeness strategies found in her sales letters which include formality (e.g. showing respect through the use of honourifics) and relationship building (e.g. through expressions of solidarity) The theory of politeness is also used in examining power and status in two analyses of letters of request, as we can see in Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) and Yeung (1997) discussed earlier. Other cross-cultural studies which examine, both directly and indirectly, politeness in business letters include Maier (1992), Nickerson (1993) and Connor (1988).

Maier (1992) carried out research on politeness strategies in business letters written in a fictional situation by a group of native speakers of English (business professionals) and a group of non-native speakers (Business English students). In this study, eight native speakers and ten non-native speakers had to write a letter to the personnel manager of the company explaining why they had unavoidably missed a job interview (apology) and to persuade the personnel manager to give him/her another interview at a later date (request). This letter can be described as multifunctional, including both apology and request. The results, analysed using Brown and Levinson's (1987)

model of Face Threatening Act (FTA), indicate that the letters written by non-native speakers are less formal and more direct than those written by native speakers who use more negative strategies to preserve the addressee's face. For example, they mitigate their apologies more, they express thanks more often, and they are less direct. The findings suggest that the non-native speakers' writing in English may be perceived negatively by the reader because of the directness and inappropriate use of 'potentially risky politeness strategies'. (Maier 1992:203)

This study contrasts with Nickerson's (1993) study which reports that Dutch business letters, written in English by the Dutch (non-native English speakers), are more formal with the use of extensive politeness strategies, and use fewer opening and confirmation moves than British letters. In this study, 82 letters written by British writers and 100 letters written in English by Dutch writers are collected from Dutch and British companies regardless of sub-genres. Examples of Nickerson's data include letters of apology, request, and confirmation. They are analysed as a whole in terms of quantitative analysis of salutations and closings, lexical items or phrases used to realise the functions such as compliments, offer, thanks and request. It could be argued that this contrast is caused by the different situations in which the two studies were conducted and the different levels of the participants' levels of English proficiency. Maier's (1992) data is based on a fictional situation and non-native participants are Business English students mostly from Japan whereas Nickerson's (1993) study is based on real-life situations using authentic business correspondence as the data. It could also be argued that the differences in findings derive from the differing nationalities of the participants. This suggests the significant role of cultural variability in written discourse across cultures.

Connor's (1988) study compares written communication patterns in English including negotiation and persuasion between two managers: Japanese and American. Unlike Maier's (1992) Japanese student participants, the Japanese participant here is a



business professional working for the Japanese subsidiary of an American company. Using the discipline of contrastive text linguistics, Connor (1988) analyses the rhetorical and communicative patterns of both Japanese and American managers in their reciprocal business correspondence (47 letters, telexes, emails and reports) during a two-year period of negotiation concerning suggested changes in the company's sales training procedures in Japan. Connor (1988) reports on the differences in general rhetorical and communicative patterns which reflect different attitudes toward communicative directness, concern for harmony and rhythm of interaction between the Japanese and American managers. She further explains, 'The American manager did not hesitate to suggest quick changes by openly criticizing the Japanese manager. The Japanese manager, on the other hand, used subtle ways of saying "no"'. (ibid:69) Her findings imply some differences in politeness strategies used between the American and Japanese managers.

The above study shows that the American business letters are more direct and show less concern for harmony, which contrasts with Maier's (1992) findings. Again, this may be caused by the different scenarios in which the two studies were conducted. Maier's (1992) context is a fictional situation in the classroom whereas Connor's (1988) context involves real-life business situations in which the participants are business professionals.

This supports Halliday's (1994:xv) dimensions of discourse analysis which consist of the *understanding* of the text (how, and why, the text means what it does), and the *evaluation* of the text (why the text is, or is not, an effective tool for its own purposes – in what respects it succeeds and in what respects it fails or is less successful). The latter requires 'an interpretation not only of the text itself but also of its context (context of situation, context of culture), and of the systematic relationship between context and text'. (ibid:xv)

This present study takes into account various disciplines of applied linguistics, including politeness strategies. An investigation into cross-cultural politeness strategies used by Thais and native English speakers could add some insightful findings on the use of politeness strategies by people from different languages and cultural backgrounds to the previous literature described above.

## 2.4 Implications of the Literature Review

It seems clear that more research in cross-cultural written business discourse needs to be conducted, further developed and expanded into a larger scale by taking into account various genres and sub-genres of business discourse. Bhatia (1993:39) states, ‘Genre, after all, is a socio-culturally communicative event and is judged effective to the extent that it can ensure pragmatic success in the business or other professional context in which it is used.’ According to van Dijk (1997:2), the study of discourse involves three main dimensions: (a) *language use* (b) the *communication of beliefs* (cognition), and (c) *interaction* in social situations. It is important that research into cross-cultural written business discourse realises the importance of those dimensions because, as a genre, written business discourse is multidimensional yet can be systematised for linguistic and pedagogical purposes. The aspects of text worth analysing, as emerging from the literature review, include the analysis of mood, orientation, moves and steps or rhetorical patterns, linguistic realisation (lexical, syntactic and semantic), and politeness strategies. These aspects will be followed up in the analytic sections of the present research, which aim to pursue the discipline of contrastive text linguistics and develop a cross-cultural awareness for both linguistic and pedagogical purposes.

If programs for teaching the use of written language are to be effective, they need to be grounded in an understanding of its nature; its mode of operation as a discourse process realized as text, its cultural variability, its conceptual and communicative character as a mediation. (Widdowson 1987:iv)



This research aims to create a better linguistic understanding of written business correspondence across cultures (that is, English and Thai) especially in the frequently found sub-genres of persuasive correspondence (i.e. sales promotion, request, and invitation) to ensure pragmatic success in local and multinational business contexts, and to develop a principled pedagogical approach for Business English teaching in Thailand.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This chapter is divided into two main sections: research design, and methodology. The research design section describes the motivation of the present research, the statement of purpose and the scope of study. The methodology section outlines the procedures for the data analysis including data collection and research questions.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

##### **3.1.1 Motivation**

I have been particularly interested in cross-cultural business correspondence since my first job as a secretary to the Senior Vice President of a leading bank in Thailand in the early 1990s. At that time one of my duties was to deal with incoming and outgoing correspondence texts, both in Thai and in English, within a large number of Thai and foreign companies. My later jobs as a public relations officer responsible for investor relations and as an international marketing executive in a major telecommunications company put me in contact with the international business community and made me realise the increasing importance of English business correspondence in the Thai business context. In the course of my work, I noticed some differences between the English business letter writing of Thais and that of native English speakers. Later, when I joined the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), a Thai governmental graduate institution, as a lecturer of Business English in the School of Language and Communication in 1997, I determined to pursue research into written business discourse.



### 3.1.2 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is twofold. Firstly, it is aimed at analysing authentic persuasive correspondence written in English by Thai speakers and native English speakers. Secondly, it uses the findings from the contrastive analyses to investigate the extent to which the samples of persuasive correspondence in selected textbooks on Business English writing represent the authentic, real-life corpus.

From my previous study of materials and methods in teaching Business English to Thai MBA students (Chakorn 1998), one question that has been raised concerns the authenticity and effectiveness of Business English teaching materials nowadays. As the language of international business, English is widely used across cultures, and can be subject to cultural influence. Persuasive business discourse in English may differ from one context to another. This research is based on the Thai business context. It aims to identify the cross-cultural variation with regard to Thai speakers' and native English speakers' discourse patterns, writing conventions and strategies used in authentic persuasive correspondence, and examine to what extent these features are taken into account in Business English materials.

### 3.1.3 Scope of Study

The cross-cultural variation is investigated both quantitatively and qualitatively in Thai and English persuasive correspondence from *contrastive text linguistic* and *pragmatic* perspectives. According to Connor (1996), contrastive rhetoric involves contrastive text linguistic studies that examine, compare and contrast how texts are formed and interpreted in different languages and cultures using methods of written discourse analysis. The contrastive text linguistics in this study involves the analysis of rhetorical structures (e.g. moves, structural representation) and their linguistic realisations (e.g. linguistic features). The pragmatic perspectives include persuasion (i.e. rhetorical appeals – *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*), and politeness strategies and some

culture-bound discourse patterns. The findings in both authentic corpus and textbook corpus provide data for the future development of suitable materials and methods in teaching Business English writing, especially persuasive discourse, to Thai learners of Business English in the dynamic business world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## **3.2 Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Data Collection**

It was not easy to obtain authentic samples of business correspondence because most companies prefer to keep them in-house to maintain confidentiality. Even though I informed all companies that I would only use their correspondence for my research and that, upon their wish, any name or figure could be deleted or changed to maintain confidentiality, many companies denied cooperation. Of all 130 letters I sent to different Thai offices, only 24 replies with some samples of correspondence were received. About 10 companies sent letters of refusal to me whereas the rest did not reply at all. I went to Thailand twice in 1999 and 2000 for more data collection. Each time I called or visited selected companies in order to ask for their cooperation. Because of the difficulty caused by the issue of confidentiality, I decided to ask for any type of correspondence texts in order to set up a substantial corpus of authentic business correspondence for this research. I also wrote to or paid a visit to some Thai offices in London such as the Royal Thai embassy. My aim was to gather as much data as possible and select persuasive texts for analysis later.

Finally, my data collection was completed. The entire corpus contains 636 business correspondence texts, consisting of 413 letters, 151 faxes, 56 e-mails, 12 memos, and 4 telexes. All business correspondence texts were collected from selected Thai companies in the private sector, public sector and state enterprises under their voluntary basis upon my request. (see Appendix A for my letter of request in Thai



with an unofficial English translation) Those participating companies chose their business correspondence for me, consisting of their outgoing correspondence texts and/or the incoming correspondence texts from their foreign counterparts mostly from English-speaking countries.

One common criteria in my data collection is that each sample of business correspondence must relate to the Thai business context; that is, it is either sent out by a Thai company or is received as an incoming message by a Thai individual or company. This way the data can incorporate the correspondence written by both Thais and non-Thais especially native speakers of English from the foreign counterparts of those Thai employees. The sources of data can be categorised into 3 main groups. Examples of organisations under each group in which persuasive correspondence texts were available are presented below:

### **1. Private Sector (business companies)**

- 1.1 Thai Farmers Bank Plc.
- 1.2 Thai Glico Co., Ltd.
- 1.3 American Express (Thai) Co., Ltd.
- 1.4 Thai Airways International Limited
- 1.5 Unilever Thai Holdings Limited
- 1.6 The Siam Cement Public Company Limited

### **2. Public Sector (governmental offices)**

- 2.1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 2.2 Royal Thai Embassy, London, England
- 2.3 Office of the Board of Investment
- 2.4 Ministry of Commerce
- 2.5 The Bank of Thailand, London Representative Office
- 2.6 Office of the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister

### **3. State Enterprises (parastatal organisations)**

- 3.1 The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
- 3.2 The Mass Communication Organisation of Thailand
- 3.3 The State Railway of Thailand
- 3.4 The Communications Authority of Thailand
- 3.5 The Telephone Organization of Thailand
- 3.6 The Tourism Authority of Thailand

The types of business involved in the entire corpus are varied, for example, they include: advertising, airline, banking, credit card, hospitality, conference board, environment, electronics, import/export, university, marketing and international organisations. Examples of correspondence from foreign counterparts are, for example, Microsoft, Harvard University, Bank of England, the United Nations, Australian Embassy, International Herald Tribune, Asian Development Bank, CS First Boston (USA), Arthur Anderson Consulting (UK), Unilever (USA), The Chase Manhattan Bank (USA), Warburg Dillon Read (UK), General Motors (USA), Scotland's Hotels of Distinction (UK), and American Express (Thailand-based).

Note that I take into consideration the concept of interactive business writing, which is, according to Yli-Jokipii (1994:20), 'the exchange of written items regardless of the method of their transmission'. She explains that interactive business writing involves messages effected either via electronic media or by postal means. In her research into letters of request, Yli-Jokipii (1994:32) considers both business letters and faxes as 'letters' under the condition that they are 'type-written business messages which contain the exact date of writing and identify the recipient in the greeting and the person responsible for the message in the signature'. As this is a sensible and practical way of data classification, I have adopted her concept in my analysis of persuasive correspondence, which focuses on the content and communicative purpose rather than format or mode, although there have been differences between fax and letter correspondence noted. (see Louhiala-Salminen 1995, 1997)

Taking into account Yli-Jokipii's (1994) concept of interactive business writing and the notion of a 'letter', it is apparent that some business e-mails can be included in the category of 'letter' because they contain the date of writing together with the names of the sender and the recipient. With today's advanced information technology, e-mails are now used extensively in daily business operation worldwide, and are generally treated as a type of business correspondence. Like faxes, e-mails are transmitted via



electronic media – the messages are sent via telephone cables. The only difference is that e-mails are produced via computer-to-computer transmission instead of a fax machine. However, it is believed that a large number of e-mails are printed out and used as business documents. Thus, in addition to faxes, I have included those e-mails in this study. Henceforth all letters, faxes and e-mails here will be referred to as ‘letters’ unless a distinction is made occasionally during the analysis, then the terms ‘faxes’ and ‘e-mails’ will be used.

I am also aware of the role of e-mails as another genre of business or organisational communication, as perceived by a number of Business English researchers. (see Nickerson 1999; Mulholland 1999; Louhiala-Salminen 1999) Mulholland (1999:57) states that e-mail genre ‘has come to prominence in the modern workplace as a major element in business information retrieval and use’. Nickerson (1999) points out the increasing use of English e-mails in intercultural business communication. Louhiala-Salminen (1999) reports that e-mail messages are more speech-like and direct with fewer formalities of letter-writing. They tend to distinguish e-mails from business letters in their studies. However, the emails in my corpus share the characteristics of a letter specified earlier and have the same features and communicative purposes as a business letter. (see Appendix B for a sample) Therefore, I decided to include them in my corpus. The number of e-mails included is small, and only 18 e-mails were analysed as part of the ‘request’ corpus in Chapter 5.

Memos and telexes are somewhat different. I did not include them in the main analyses, but did use them as part of the total corpus in the section on lexicogrammatical errors in Chapter 8.

A more detailed description of all sub-genres of business correspondence in my corpus as well as the information on the correspondents is in Appendix C. There are three groups of correspondents: Thai (TH), Non-Thai or Native English speakers

(NT), and Non-Thai-Non-Native-English speakers (NTNS). As this research focuses on the persuasive writing of Thais and native English speakers, the correspondence texts written by Non-Thai-Non-Native-English speakers (NTNS) are not included in the main analyses, but are referred to where applicable. It should be noted that letter formats (e.g. block, modified/semi-block) are not taken into consideration in this research as its main focus is on the language used. Regarding the issue of confidentiality, some names, phone numbers and addresses in letter samples presented in the analytic chapters are subject to change while the content remains intact.

### **3.2.2 Research Questions**

Upon initial examination of my data and classification, it seemed that some TH and NT sub-genres of business correspondence, such as order letters, letters of appreciation/gratitude and letters of congratulation, are relatively similar. Differences are more clearly seen in persuasive letters. In my corpus, there are three types of persuasive correspondence: sales promotion, request and invitation letters. They are the main focus of this research, and are the basis for the following research questions:

- (1) What are the cross-cultural variations in terms of rhetorical form (e.g. pattern of moves and steps, structural representation) that differentiate the persuasive correspondence written by Thai speakers from that written by native speakers of English?
- (2) Do Thai business professionals use similar discourse and/or linguistic features (e.g. lexical, syntactic and semantic features) as native speakers of English in their persuasive correspondence in English?
- (3) Are there any similarities and/or differences between the two groups concerning pragmatic issues such as persuasion and politeness strategies?



- (4) Can the similarities and/or differences from Questions (1), (2) and (3) be explained in terms of cultural and/or linguistic influence from the Thai language?
- (5) Do (artificial/authentic) samples of persuasive correspondence presented in selected Business English textbooks used in Thailand give a true representation of an authentic, real-life corpus, which is indicative of reality, in terms of variety, authenticity and effectiveness?

This thesis adopts a multidisciplinary approach to the analysis of persuasive correspondence. For (1) and (2), it will apply a move-based analysis with linguistic realisations to the letters of sales promotion (following Bhatia 1993; to be compared to Zhu 2000 and Hiranburana 1996), and the letters of invitation (Zhu 2001; Hiranburana 1996), while a structure-based analysis will be used for the letters of request (following Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996; Yli-Jokipii 1994&1996). The concept of the ‘delayed introduction of purpose’ (Hinds 1990) and we-/you-orientations (Bhatia 1993; Jenkins and Hinds 1987) will also be taken into consideration. For (3), the Aristotelian concept of persuasive rhetoric (Zhu 2001; Campbell 1998; Hyland 1998) will be used to compare TH and NT persuasive strategies while the concept of face and politeness (following Brown and Levinson 1987) will be used for the investigation into politeness strategies including indirectness and formality.

As for (4), my knowledge of the Thai language will be applied for examining any linguistic and cultural influence found in my corpus; and reference will be made to Jenkins and Hinds (1987), Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988), Indrasuta (1988) and Mulholland (1997) where relevant. For (5), selected samples from three textbooks will be examined in the same way as my authentic corpus is analysed [see (1)-(4)], and comparison between the two groups will be discussed in detail.

The findings will give insights into various aspects of cross-cultural similarities and differences between the Thai and English ways of writing letters of sales promotion, request and invitation, and can be used to suggest pedagogical implications and applications for improving the teaching of persuasive letter writing in the cross-cultural context.

### **3.2.3 Data Analysis and Limitations of Research**

Each type of persuasive correspondence is analysed by using text and discourse analysis within the area of contrastive rhetoric in terms of a range of structural, textual, and pragmatic features so as to answer the proposed research questions. The main analyses can be summarised as follows:

- Rhetorical structures and functions (e.g. move structure or structural representation, move function and realisation)
- Linguistic features (i.e. lexical, syntactic and semantic features)
- Rhetorical appeals (i.e. *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*)
- Politeness strategies (following Brown and Levinson 1987)
- Cultural issues (e.g. cultural and linguistic influence from the Thai language)

It should be noted that the research methods used in analysing each type of persuasive letters are subject to adaptability and practicability. Further details are included in relevant chapters.

This is a corpus-based study which has a number of limitations. Firstly, I had no control over the selection process of the correspondence texts as the participating companies or organisations (most of which treat their business correspondence as confidential) chose them for me upon my request. Secondly, the sources of my corpus varied, so my data are not specific to any particular type of business, but represent a genre-specific analysis which considers the data from different sources



within the Thai business context as a whole. Thirdly, I could trace the nationality of the writer of each correspondence text, but it was not always possible to know the relationship between the writer and the reader or the recipient. Therefore, this research does not discuss issues of power and status in the analyses.

So far I have outlined the research design and methodology which describe my motivation, purposes, scope of study, as well as the research questions, data collection classification and analysis, and limitations of the research. The analytic part is presented in the following chapters.

# CHAPTER 4

## ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS OF SALES PROMOTION

In Thailand, sales promotion is one of the most popular types of persuasive correspondence written extensively in English. This chapter reports on the analysis of authentic sales promotion letters from Thailand, which examines rhetorical moves, and their linguistic realisations. The cross-cultural variation is investigated from contrastive rhetorical perspectives with an aim to identify cross-cultural differences that distinguish the promotional writing styles between Thais and native English speakers in the Thai business context.

### 4.1 Data Classification

In his study of product and self promotion in business settings, Bhatia (1993:45) categorises the sales promotion as a genre and explains that,

A sales promotion letter is an unsolicited letter addressed to a selected group of prospective customers (they may be individuals or companies) in order to persuade them to buy a product or service.

As this is a clear and accurate definition, I used it to single out the sales promotion letters in my corpus. The data for the present are 20 unsolicited sales promotion texts. They consist of 18 letters and 2 faxes. As the faxes have the same functions as the letters, I simply call all of them ‘sales promotion letters’. They are divided into 3 categories:

Table 4.1: Data Classification

Category	Description	Abbreviation	Number of letters
1.	Non-Thai letters	NT	6
2.	American Express letters	AMEX	7
3.	Thai letters	TH	7



Non-Thai letters (NT) are written by native speakers of English; two of which are written by British people whereas four are written by Americans. All these NT letters were sent to the potential Thai customers in Thailand from the United States and the United Kingdom. American Express letters (AMEX) are from American Express (Thai) Co., Ltd. They are written by Thai local staff, but have a unique style which can be considered as American-influenced-Thai-English. Thai letters (TH) are written by Thais from different companies. These 20 letters have the same communicative purpose; that is, to promote sales by persuading the readers to buy their product or service. The types of businesses involved are, for example, hospitality, finance, credit card and insurance. (see Appendix D for the background of each letter)

## **4.2 Pattern of Moves**

Bhatia (1993) suggests that the sales promotion letters have seven moves, as illustrated in the following sample letter from Singapore.

### **Sample 4.1: Bhatia's (1993) sales promotion letter**

(see overleaf)

STANDARD BANK  
268 Orchard Road, Yen Sun Building, Singapore 0923

4 December 1987

Mr. Albert Chan  
1 Sophia Road, 05-06  
Peace Centre  
Singapore 0922

Dear sir,

We are expertly aware that international financial managers need to be able to ask the right questions and work in the market place with confidence.

**MOVE 1 Establishing credentials**

Corporate Treasury Services, Standard Bank, now provides a week-long Treasure Training programme designed to develop awareness and confidence in managers.

**MOVE 2 Introducing the offer**  
(i) Offering product/service

We explain the mechanics of foreign exchange and money markets. We discuss risk from an overall standpoint and practical hedging techniques to manage foreign exchange risks. We also discuss treasury management information systems, taxation and the latest treasury techniques.

(ii) Essential detailing of the offer

We will be holding our next Treasury Training Programme from 24-28 February 1987, inclusive. The fee for the Training Programme will be US\$1,500 per person to include all luncheons and a dinner as indicated in the schedule as well as all course materials.

The programme is both rigorous and flexible. It can be tailored to fit the needs of a whole corporation or just a few levels within the company.

(iii) Indicating value of the offer

We are pleased to inform you that if your company sponsors 6 or more staff for the course, we will offer you a discount of US\$100 per person.

**MOVE 3 Offering incentives**

For your convenience, I enclose a reservation form which should be completed and returned directly to me. If you have any question or would like to discuss the programme in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me (Telephone No. 532 6488/ telex No. 29052).

**MOVE 4 Enclosing documents**

**MOVE 5 Soliciting response**

As the number of participants at each training programme is limited, we would urge you to finalize as soon as possible your plans to participate.

**MOVE 6 Using pressure tactics**

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.  
Yours faithfully

**MOVE 7 Ending politely**

Mr. G. Huff

*Reconstructed from Bhatia (1993:48)*



Bhatia (1993) also expresses flexibility in his move structure. He states that it is not always obligatory for the writer to use all the seven moves in the same order.

Just as there is a certain degree of flexibility in the number of moves used in a specific promotional effort by considering some moves more essential than others, there is a certain degree of freedom in the sequencing of these moves. (ibid:56)

The degree of flexibility for each move proposed by Bhatia (1993) is summarised in the following table:

**Table 4.2: Move flexibility**

Move	Description	Flexibility
1	Establishing credentials	Obligatory
2	Introducing the offer	Obligatory Obligatory Obligatory
(i)	Offering the product or service	
(ii)	Essential detailing of the offer	
(iii)	Indicating value of the offer	Obligatory
3	Offering incentives	Optional
4	Enclosing documents	Optional
5	Soliciting response	Obligatory
6	Using pressure tactics	Optional
7	Ending politely	Optional (but found in every letter in his corpus)

Bhatia (1993) argues that Move 1 is more or less obligatory and generally appears in the opening position, followed by Move 2, the introduction to the offer. However, he also says that in the case in which a new product is being promoted, the letter can open with Move 2, and Move 1 is relegated to a later position. Generally, Move 2, which consists of (i), (ii) and (iii), is the most essential part of the letter. Move 2(iii), *Indicating value of the offer*, may be scattered around the essential detailing of the offer, and thus sometimes does not form a distinctive unit by itself. Move 3, *Offering incentives*, is seen as cultural-specific rather than universal. As Bhatia’s data include a group of letters from Singapore, he points out that Move 3 is commonly used locally rather than internationally, but there is an increasing trend toward using this move more often even in the West. Move 4, *Enclosing documents*, is also optional, but widely used by a lot of companies in accordance with their sales philosophy. Move 5,

*Soliciting response*, is obligatory and is claimed as the next most important move after Move 2. Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*, is optional depending on the lines of products or business cultures. Both Move 5 and 6 can be very occasionally used as a closing move. However, Move 7, *Ending politely*, always marks the close. Gan (1989), cited in Bhatia (1993:59), reports 100% use of this move in sales promotion letters and letters of enquiry and reply in his study of closings in business letters.

### 4.3 Move Analysis of the NT, AMEX and TH Letters

Following Bhatia’s (1993) pattern of moves, I conducted a move analysis of the sales promotion letters in my corpus. In this section, three sample letters, one from each category, are presented here in order to give an overview to the move analysis, followed by the overall statistical results.

**Sample 4.2: NT sales promotion letter (NT02)**

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
GEORGE F. BAKER FOUNDATION

Jason B. Smith  
Senior Associate Dean  
For Executive Education  
Larry T. Kennedy Professor  
of Human Relations

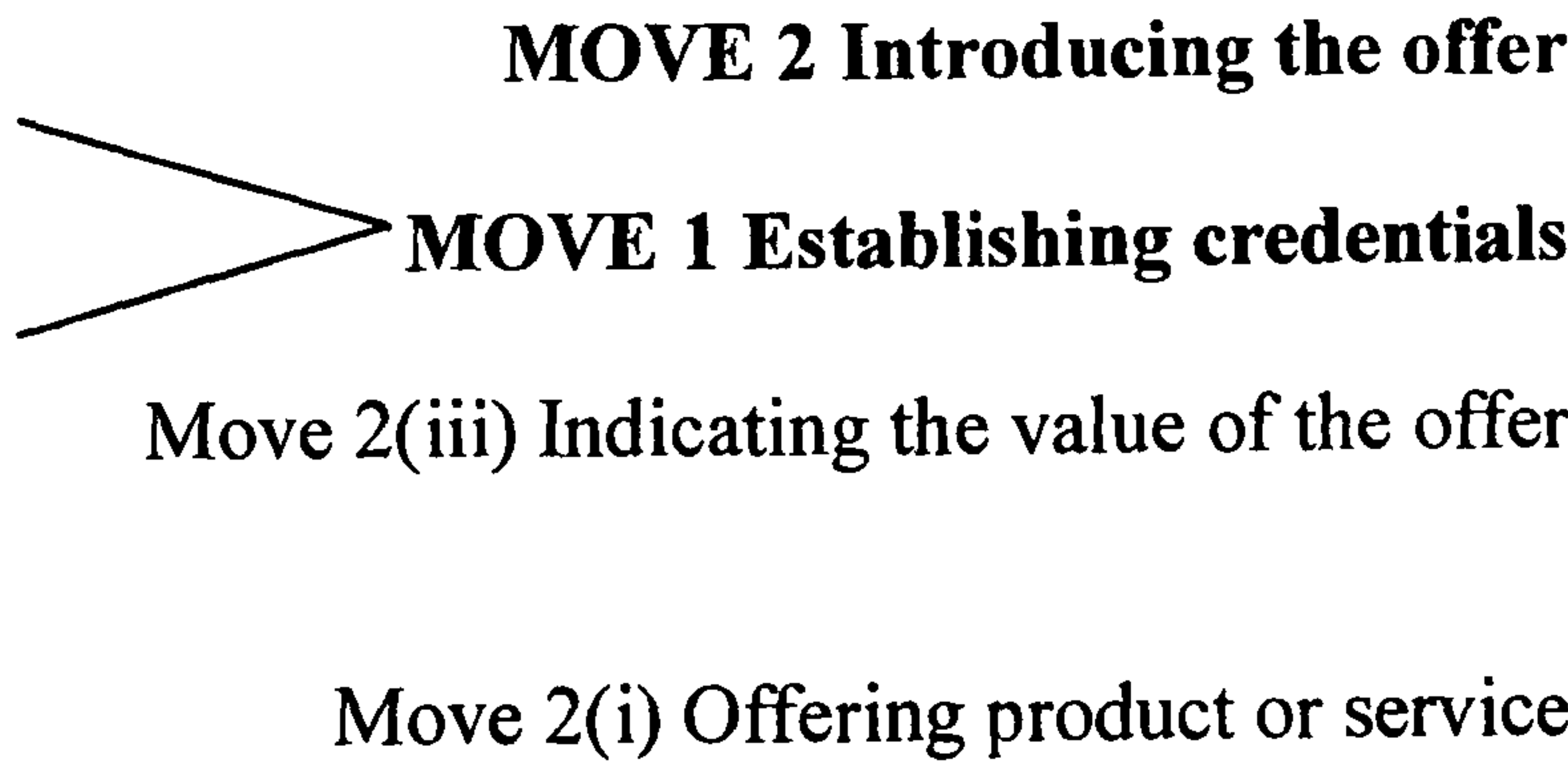
Cotton Field  
Boston, Messachusetts 02004  
617-373-2485  
Fax: 617-424-9999  
Telex: 6789102 ABHDEOR  
January 18, 1994

Mr. Panya Rumjai  
Chairman  
Thai People Bank  
224 Bangkok Avenue  
Bangkok 10224 THAILAND

Dear Panya:

The Harvard Business School’s Focused Management Courses provide a highly charged one- to two-week educational experience led by senior Harvard Business School faculty members -- some of the foremost innovators in their fields. Participants develop analytical and conceptual skills that greatly increase the value of their contributions within their own organizations.

One course which may be of interest to you or your colleagues is **Managing International Collaboration**. Applications are now being accepted.





**Managing International Collaboration** (May 10 – May 13), a new course, is designed for CEOs, division presidents, and other senior-level executives who manage cross-border relationships. It examines the challenges of such collaborations, and provides concepts for maximizing the results of these interactions. Please find this course’s brochure and application enclosed.

Move 2(ii) Essential detailing of the offer

**MOVE 4 Enclosing documents**

You might also consider two other related courses: **Managing Global Opportunities: China** (June 5 – June 26), which examines the enormous emerging market of China and Hong Kong, and **Executive Negotiation** (May 15 – May 20), a new course for executives who manage complex negotiations.

Move 2(i) Offering product or service

For more information about these or any of our Executive Education programs, please call us at 617-373-2485 Ext. 175, or fax us at 617-424-9999.

**MOVE 5 Soliciting Response**

Please note that the application deadline is six weeks in advance of the start of each course.

**MOVE 6 Using Pressure tactics**

Yours sincerely,  
Jason B. Smith  
Enclosures

*Indicating Move 4 Enclosing documents*

This letter has Move 1, Move 2, Move 4, Move 5 and Move 6. It is written by an American on behalf of Harvard University, a well-known institution in the United States. The pattern of moves is quite similar to Bhatia’s (1993) findings. The first paragraph indicates Move 2, *Introducing the offer*, within which Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, can be realised by the description of the expertise of the university ‘...led by senior Harvard Business School faculty members – some of the foremost innovators in their fields’. It may be noted that the letter ends with Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*, instead of Move 7, *Ending politely*, which is seen as a typical closing move by Bhatia (1993) and Gan (1989). It could be assumed that the writer expects the product to sell itself, and for this reason, he may choose to be straightforward and to the point. This letter simply shows the writing style of a native speaker of English. The next two letters will represent different writing styles; one can be considered as American-influenced-Thai-English and the other as pure Thai-English style.

**Sample 4.3: AMEX sales promotion letter (AMEX08)**  
American Express (Thai) Co., Ltd. 888 P.S. Bldg., Krungthep Road, Bangkok 10888, Thailand

Dear Cardmember,

**Great savings.....up to 50% on an enjoyable holiday**  
**At Dusit, Royal Princess and Thani Hotels & Resort and AVIS**  
**From now until October 31, 1998**

**MOVE 2 Introducing the offer**

**MOVE 6 Using pressure tactics**

This is our way of saying “Thank you” for using the American Express Card. We are always looking for more privileges to offer you and now we are pleased to offer you this opportunity to enjoy a superb holiday in a wonderful atmosphere at Dusit Group Hotels & Resorts all over Thailand, and add to your comfort with a special offer from AVIS. As an American Express Cardmember, you’ll receive these exclusive privileges:

**MOVE 2 Introducing the offer**

(i) Offering product or service

(iii) Indicating value of the offer

(ii) Essential detailing of the product

- Savings of up to 50% on room rates at Dusit, Royal Princess and Thani Hotels & Resorts.
- Savings of up to 10% at Dusit Group restaurants and pubs.
- Savings of 50% on car rental at AVIS nationwide.

These great savings aren’t the only reason to use the American Express Card. For every Baht 1,000 you charge to the card at participating hotels and resorts, you’ll have a chance to win...

**MOVE 3 Offering incentives**

- Two free round-the-world tickets on STAR ALLIANCE (1 prize).
- Free accommodation for two for 3 days and 2 nights at any Dusit, Royal Princess or Thani Hotels & Resorts (16 prizes).
- Dining voucher for two at any Dusit, Royal Princess or Thani Hotels & Resorts restaurant (6 prizes).
- Five free days of Self-Drive Car rental, valid for one year, from AVIS (5 prizes).

It’s easy! Every time you stay with Dusit Group or rent a car from AVIS, just settle your bill with the American Express Card, and you can enjoy great hospitality with exclusive privileges – and a chance to win!

For more details, please contact our Customer Service on 222-4444.

**MOVE 5 Soliciting response**

Yours sincerely,

Jarisa Parkpumchaiya  
Manager – Cardmember Loyalty & Communications

*P.S. For every Baht 25 charged to the Card you’ll also receive one Membership Rewards points which you can redeem for valuable rewards. The more you use the Card, the faster you can earn a prize.*

**MOVE 3 Offering incentives**



The AMEX letters seem to have a unique sales promotion writing style in general. Every letter has a heading which summarises the offer. In this letter, apart from Move 1, *Introducing the offer*, the heading also includes a deadline of the offer which can be seen as Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*. There is no Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, presumably because the letter is addressed to an existing customer. The body starts with Move 2, *Introducing the offer*, and then Move 3, *Offering incentives*, which is realised by a chance to win on a prize draw. Note that Move 3 is repeated in the postscript. This letter uses Move 5, *Soliciting response*, as a closing move, instead of a polite ending. The last sample letter is a TH fax.

**Sample 4.4: TH sales promotion letter (TH14)**

IMPRO CO., LTD.  
110 Prachaya Rd., Samsen Nai,  
Phayathai, Bangkok 10400 THAILAND  
Tel. 666-7878 Fax 666-6869

FAX  
To: K. Prapai  
Company:  
Fax: 623-0172, 623-0710  
Phone: 623-0700 Ext. 441  
**Re: Practical Business Writing Seminar**

From: Salida (Bam)/Boonlert  
Company: Impro Co., Ltd.  
Pages: 5  
Date: May 28, 1997

Dear Sir/Madam,

Impro Company Limited is happy to invite you and your staff to our “Practical Business Writing Seminar 1997” on 11, 12, and 18 July 1997 at Regent Hotel. Practical Business Writing is more than just a lesson in language usage. It is also an opportunity to meet and work on tasks with people who have to write just like you, and have to face the same challenge you do. It is your chance to find out what the standard is for a person at your level and to ensure you keep the standard. It is an opportunity to learn from your peers, and to find out what they think of what you know; all with expert supervision, stimulating lectures and relevant tasks.

The Practical Business Writing Seminar is a three full day intensive seminar program (09:00 – 17:00 hrs). Due to the limited number of available seats, we would appreciate if you could send in your application to 666-6869 as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Salida Intarajakraj  
Marketing Director, Impro Company Limited

**MOVE 2 Introducing the offer**  
(i) offering product or service

(iii) Indicating value of the offer

(ii) Essential detailing of the offer

**MOVE 6 Using pressure tactics**

**MOVE 5 Soliciting response**

This TH fax shows Move 2, Move 6, and Move 5. Like the AMEX sample, there is neither Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, nor Move 7, *Ending politely*. The writer ends with Move 6 and Move 5 which are found in the same sentence. The writer seems to focus on indicating the value of the offer. He extensively uses ‘we’ and ‘you’ orientation.

From these three examples, we can see that the pattern of moves varies. Neither the AMEX nor TH letter has Move 1, *Establishing credentials*. Move 3, *Offering incentives*, does not exist in the above TH sample or in any TH letter in my corpus. However, it is found in every AMEX letter and in 50% of the NT letters. This, as I mentioned earlier, seems to contradict Bhatia’s (1993) findings which claim that offering incentives is regarded as cultural-specific in Southeast Asia based on his data from Singapore. The above TH sample is the only TH letter (out of 7) which contains Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*. This move is found in 71% of the AMEX letters and 50% of the NT letters. This reveals a similarity between the Thai (TH) and Chinese letters as Zhu’s (2000a) findings suggest that the Chinese sales letters do not normally use pressure tactics. She states, ‘The avoidance of pressure tactics derives from the need to show respect and harmony.’ (ibid:61) This is also true in the Thai business context. Finally, It is interesting to note that none of the three examples has Move 7, *Ending politely*. They either end with Move 5 or 6. These differences show that the pattern of moves in sales promotion letters varies across cultures.

I carefully analysed the remaining letters by focusing on each move in Bhatia’s (1993) seven-move pattern. The statistical results are presented in the following figures:



Figure 4.1: Non-Thai sales promotion letters (NT)

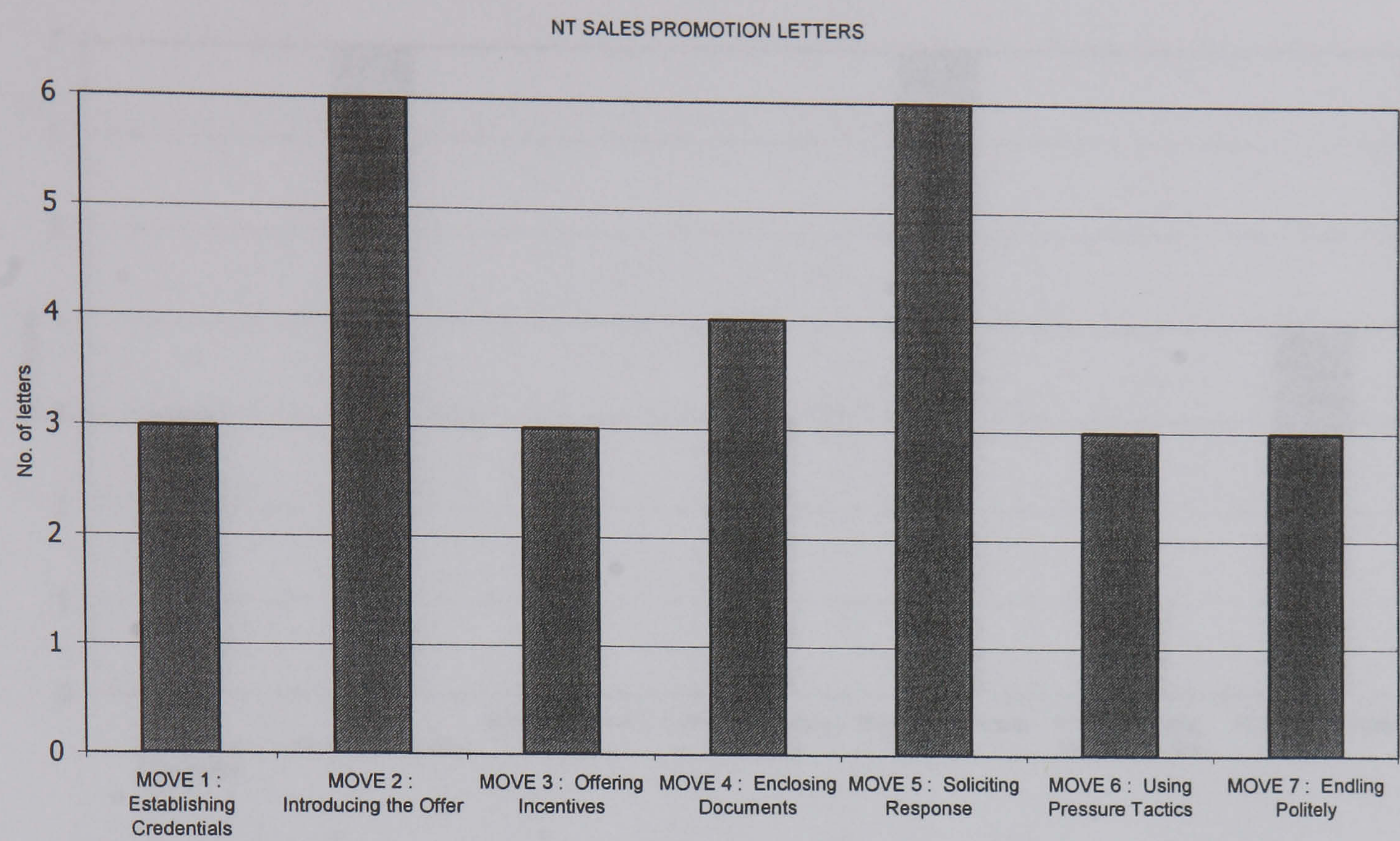


Figure 4.2: American Express sales promotion letters (AMEX)

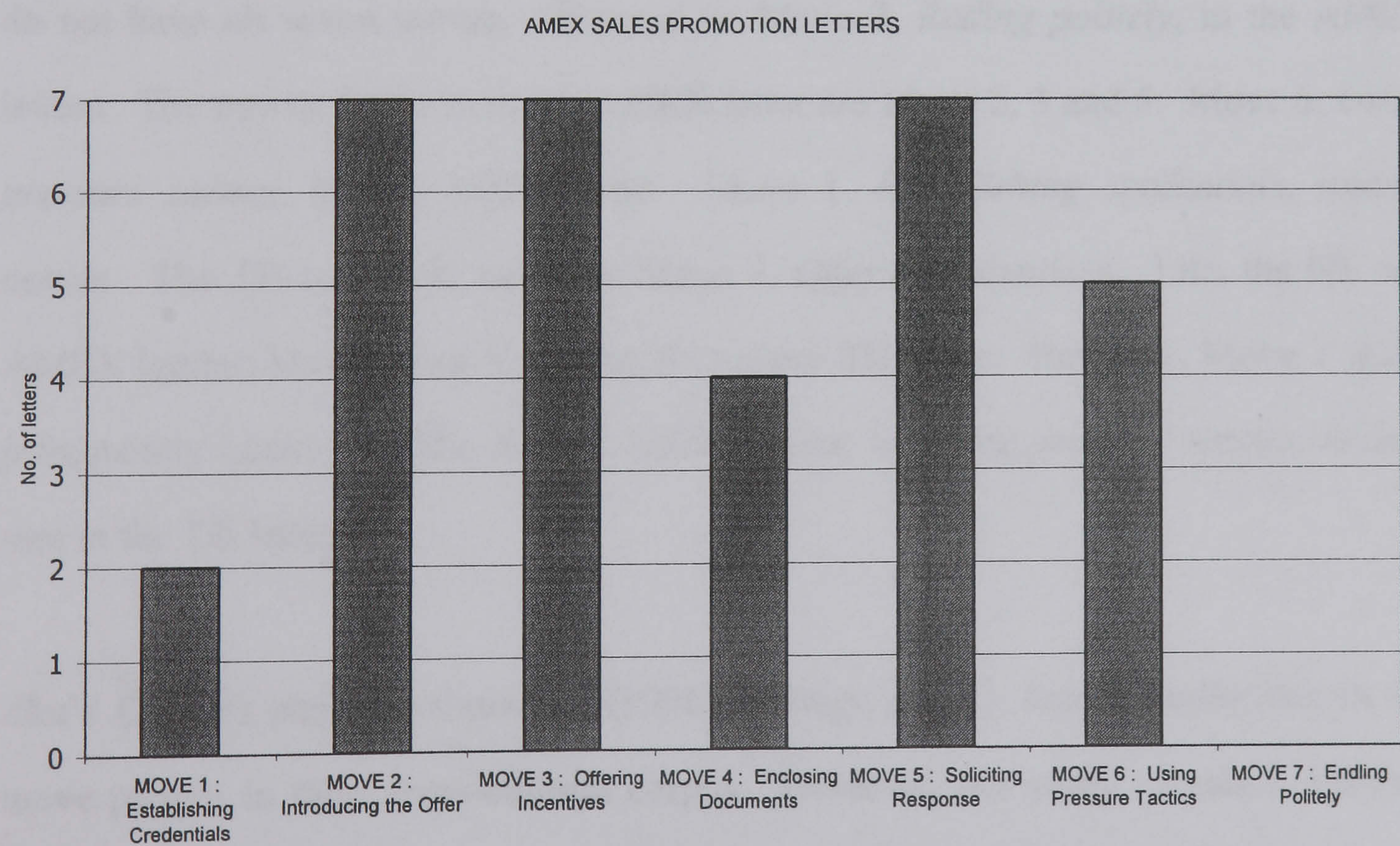
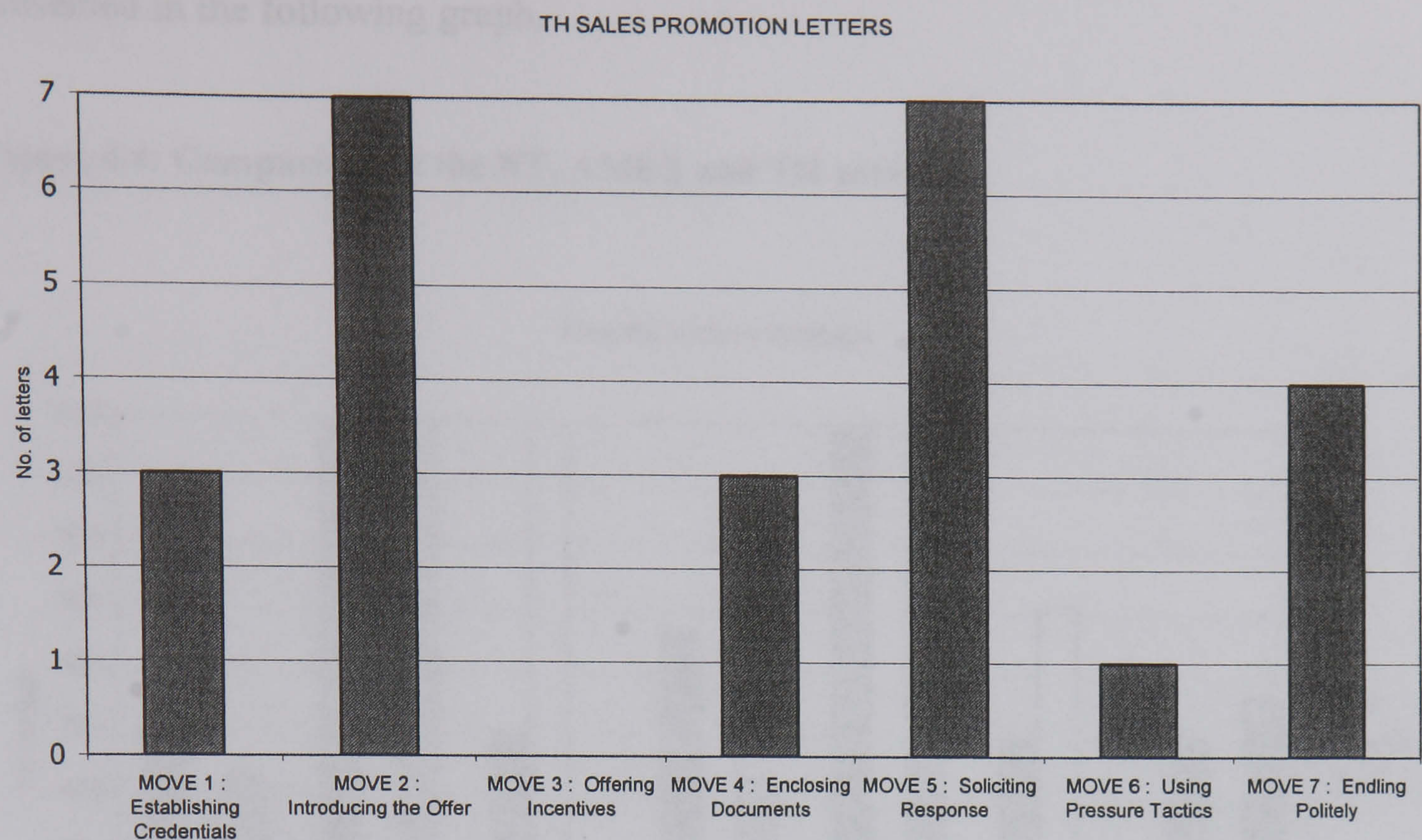




Figure 4.3: Thai sales promotion letters (TH)



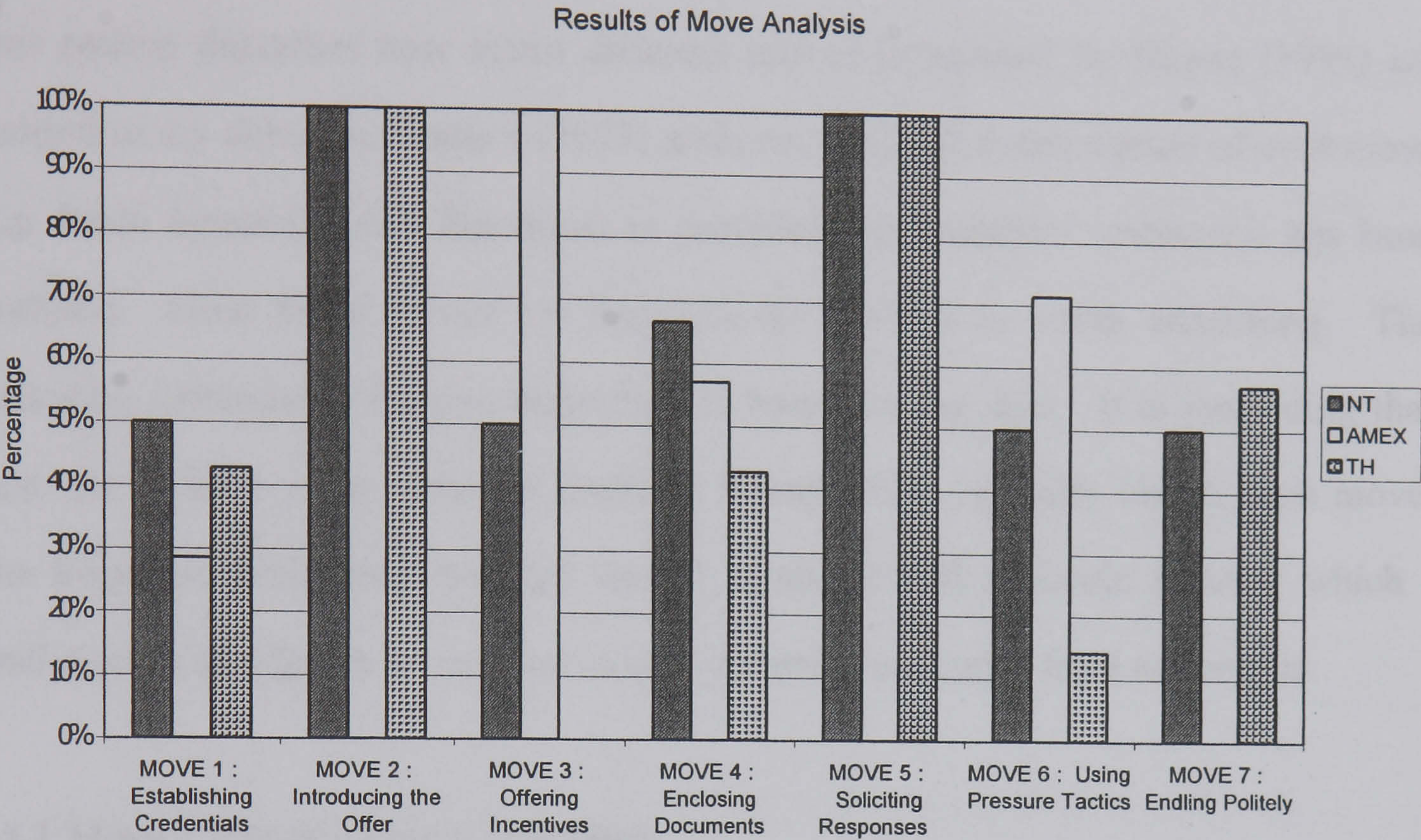
It is interesting to see that the patterns of moves in each category have both similarities and differences. The results show that all seven moves are found in the NT letters. Move 2 and 5 appear in every letter. Move 1, 3, 6 and 7 are equally found in fifty per cent of the NT letters. On the other hand, the AMEX and TH categories do not have all seven moves. There is no Move 7, *Ending politely*, in the AMEX letters. The moves found in every AMEX letter are Move 2, 3 and 5. Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*, is also highly used. Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, seldom occurs. The TH letters do not have Move 3, *Offering incentives*. Like the NT and AMEX letters, Move 2 and 5 are found in every TH letter. However, Move 1 and 4 infrequently occur. Unlike AMEX letters, Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*, is very rare in the TH letters.

Zhu's (2000b) and Hiranburana's (1996) findings mainly report similarities in the move pattern in their cross-cultural corpus. However, my study reveals a different outcome. The pattern of moves varies among the NT, AMEX and TH letters. As displayed above, some major differences can be found in the AMEX and TH letters which are written by Thais because they do not have all seven moves suggested by



Bhatia (1993). To illustrate this, the comparison between the three categories is presented in the following graph.

Figure 4.4: Comparison of the NT, AMEX and TH moves



From Figure 4.4 above, it is likely that Move 2, *Introducing the offer*, and Move 5, *Soliciting response*, are crucial and obligatory for sales promotion letters in general. The above results support Bhatia’s (1993) findings except the fact that he also regards Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, as an obligatory opening move. In my data, Move 1 seems to be optional and not essential since less than 50% of the letters as a whole contained any information on establishing the company’s credentials. Move 7, *Ending politely*, is also less common. It does not always mark the close and contradicts Gan’s (1989) findings which report that this move is found in all sales promotion letters. Bhatia’s claim that Move 3, *Offering incentives*, is seen as culturally determined (commonly used locally in South East Asia) does not seem to fit in this case because the TH letters do not have this move at all. On the contrary, it is found in every AMEX letter which is written on behalf of American Express, a multinational company. It is also found in 50% of the NT letters as well. Thus this



move should not be regarded as cultural-specific in South East Asia (especially not in Thailand).

## 4.4 Discussion of Move Realisation

This section describes how seven different moves introduced by Bhatia (1993) are realised in my data. In Bhatia's (1993) analysis, although a description of each move (e.g. basic meanings and functions) is provided, no linguistic realisation has been explored. How these moves are linguistically realised is worth examining. The following discussion of move realisation is based on my data. It is interesting that there are at least some common linguistic forms which typically realise each move. The linguistic realisation includes lexical, syntactic and semantic features which I shall discuss in relation to each move with authentic examples from my corpus.

### 4.4.1 Move 1 Establishing Credentials

This move is rather infrequent in my data although Bhatia's (1993) study suggests that it is obligatory and is regarded as the opening move. My analysis shows that the opening move can have a variety of functions, not only *establishing credentials*. Here I will only focus on the sales promotion letters that have '*establishing credentials*'. Three of the six NT letters include this move, as do two of the seven AMEX letters and three of the seven TH letters. The clauses that indicate Move 1, *Establishing Credentials*, are of the same mood type – declarative. According to Bhatia (1993), the writer can either highlight the expertise and achievements of the company or indicate his/her perception of the interests and needs of the potential customer while implying that the company can fulfil those interests and needs. The former approach often uses the '*we*' orientation (Bhatia 1993:50) whereas the latter frequently use the '*you*' orientation (ibid:50). However, another kind of orientation is also found in my data. I shall call it the *topic-orientation* because it is just the information that the



writer conveys to the reader without the use of ‘we’ or ‘you’. The following table shows the three kinds of orientation found in this move:

Table 4.3: Orientations in Move 1

Move 1 Orientations	NT	AMEX	TH
We-orientation	NT01	-	TH19
You-orientation	NT04	AMEX13	-
Topic-orientation	NT02	AMEX11	TH18 & 20

Like Bhatia’s (1993) findings, the we-orientation here is also related to the description of the company’s success and achievements. For example,

‘We are writing to you to introduce **ourselves** as one of the leading companies providing environmental consultancy business in Thailand. ERM Group is a worldwide environmental, health and safety consulting group employing over 2,500 professionals. Having more than 80 countries throughout North and South America, Europe and the Asia Pacific Region, **we** are known to clients for **our** excellence of work and hospitality of service.’ (TH19)

This we-orientation is similar to what Jenkins and Hinds (1987) call ‘writer-orientation’. It is achieved through the use of the linguistic forms ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘ourselves’, and a focus on the interests and achievements of the writer or the writer’s company. From the above example, the highlights of the company’s expertise and success can be summarised as follows:

Table 4.4: We-orientation in Move 1

Extracts from TH19	Focus/key terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- one of the leading companies</li><li>- a worldwide environmental, health and safety consulting group</li><li>- employing over 2,500 professionals</li><li>- having more than 80 countries throughout North and South America, Europe and the Asia Pacific Region</li><li>- known for our excellence of work</li><li>- known for our ... hospitality of service</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- leading status</li><li>- worldwide</li><li>- large size</li><li>- worldwide, international</li><li>- excellent quality</li><li>- hospitality</li></ul>

As we can see from the focus or key terms, the writer tries to create a good impression of the company by emphasising its worldwide leading status as a major company which provides high quality work and service. The we-orientation is used to convey this message to the reader.

The you-orientation is, as in Bhatia’s (1993) findings, used when the writer tries to express the interests and needs of the potential customer while implying that his product or service can fulfil those interests and needs. For example,

*With the dramatic changes which have occurred in Asia since July, it is clear that change is unavoidable and that the quality of **your** human resources is paramount to sustainable national and corporate growth and development. To **you** in addressing this need, we offer two training programs which we believe **you** will find helpful.* (NT04)

Establishing need

Offering to fulfil the need

Jenkins and Hinds (1987) view this as ‘reader-orientation’, achieved through the use of the linguistic forms ‘you’, ‘your’ and ‘yourself/yourselves’. The idea is to address the issue personally and directly to the reader who is the prospective customer. According to the above example, the writer begins with his/her perception of the need of the reader, then he clearly states how the company can fulfil that need.

However, in Move 1 *Establishing Credentials*, there is another type of orientation which is neither we- nor you-oriented. I propose to call it ‘topic-orientation’. It is used twice as much as either we- or you-orientation in my data. The topic-orientation does not refer to ‘we’ or ‘you’, but simply provides brief promotional information which can be considered as *establishing credentials*. For example,



[Promoting Course]

‘The Harvard Business School’s Focused Management Courses provide a highly charged one- to two-week educational experience led by senior Harvard School faculty members – some of the foremost innovators in their fields.’ (NT02)

[Promoting Paintings Sale]

‘Asst. Prof. Winai Phu-numphon is a highly-skilled environment artist, who presents a series of environmental and cultural paintings made throughout his working life.’ (TH18)

The above examples are informative and do not address anybody in particular. They seem to have the effect of distancing the writer from the offer since the messages are rather factual with a sense of appraisal. They implicitly *establish credentials* without being too promotional. The terms ‘*led by senior Harvard School faculty members – some of the foremost innovators in their fields*’ and ‘*a highly-skilled environment artist*’ clearly imply the significance of the upcoming offers. The adjectives ‘senior’, ‘foremost’ and ‘highly-skilled’ are of appraisal nature, which helps strengthen the sales promotion. I shall not discuss it further here because a detailed discussion of the appraisal analysis will be presented in Move 2, in which the appraisal items are used most extensively.

It may be noted that the realisation of Move 1, *Establishing Credentials*, very much depends on the techniques the writer chooses to apply to create a good impression of the company or the offer to the reader, such as the description of the company’s success and/or the reference to the needs and interests of the potential customer. In doing so, the we- or you- and/or topic-orientations are chosen by the writer according to his/her technique(s) as the means to get the message across, with the occasional use of appraisal items.

#### 4.4.2 Move 2 Introducing the Offer

My data confirms Bhatia's (1993) findings that this move is the most essential part of the sales promotion letters. In every sale promotion letter, the writer introduces the product or service that he/she is promoting. Bhatia (1993:51) also suggests that there are three important aspects of this move:

- (i) Offering the product or service
- (ii) Essential detailing of the product or service
- (iii) Indicating value of the product or service

These aspects could be regarded as sub-moves or steps of Move 2. According to my data, the sequencing of these sub-moves or steps is flexible. Although the writer tends to use all of them, it is not necessary that he/she put them in the same order. Generally, the description of the product or service plays an important role in this move realisation. Some linguistic features can be identified as the main indicators that realise this move. I will discuss some typical linguistic features found in each sub-move or step, and then point out the common trait used in the realisation of Move 2 as a whole.

##### Move 2(i) Offering the Product or Service

This is an introduction to the offer which the writer normally tries to clarify his/her purpose of writing. Sometimes it begins with the phrase 'I am writing to...' or 'We are writing to...'. The verbs 'to offer', 'to tell' and the verbal phrase 'to let you know' are frequently used in this step. For example,

'I wanted to be the first **to let you know** that we have expanded this series of specially-priced sailings...' (NT01)

'We are always looking for more privileges **to offer** you and now we are pleased **to offer** you this opportunity to enjoy a superb holiday in a wonderful atmosphere at Dusit Group Hotels & Resorts all over Thailand, and add to your comfort with a special offer from AVIS.' (AMEX08)



‘I’m writing **to tell** you of a comprehensive insurance plan that has been designed for Cardmembers with high financial standings like yourself.’ (AMEX12)

All three examples above use the you-orientation as the writer aims to focus all the attention at the target or individual reader.

The verbal phrase ‘has been designed for’ in AMEX12 emphasizes the relevance between the offer and the reader who might be the potential customer. It implies that the offer is unique to the specific reader, which can be considered as a sales tactic. To illustrate this point, here is another example:

‘Our Sixth Annual Human Resource Development Program **was designed for** senior level officials and human resource managers to assist their organizations and governments in meeting their requirements for high quality human resources for the twenty-first century.’ (NT04)

Although the above example uses the topic-orientation, most letters extensively use the you-orientation in this sub-move. The writer tries to create a reader-friendly atmosphere in order to persuade them to consider the offer. Every sentence indicating Move 2(i) is purely of declarative mood type. There is no significant difference between the NT, AMEX and TH letters in this sub-move. However, two TH letters promoting courses or seminars tend to use the verb ‘to invite’ even though they are sales promotion letters, not letters of invitation. In this way it creates a sense of invitation rather than an explicit attempt to sell the courses. The writer tends to focus more on the reader than the courses or seminars. For example,

‘Impro Company Limited is happy to invite you and your staff to our “Practical Business Writing Seminar 1997” on 11, 12, and 18 July 1997 at Regent Hotel.’ (TH14)

‘We are writing to a small number of organizations throughout the capital **to personally invite** you to attend three unique forthcoming seminars we will be conducting at Rama Garden Hotel, Bangkok.’ (TH16)

There are three NT letters promoting courses or seminars similar to the above-mentioned TH letters. None of them uses the verb ‘to invite’. Instead of emphasizing the reader, they focus more on the courses or seminars being offered. For example,

‘The Harvard Business School’s Focused Management Courses provide a highly charged one- to two-week educational experience led by senior Harvard School faculty members – some of the foremost innovators in their fields.’ (NT02)

As this is based on a small number of letters, it should not be assumed that the use of ‘to invite’ is something cultural. This observation shows that in some particular cases the NT and TH writers may use rather different strategies in offering the product or service.

### **Move 2(ii) Essential Detailing of the Offer**

This is perhaps the most informative part of the sales promotion letter. This step provides the details of the product or service the writer wants the reader to know, for example, the product/service use, condition, price, method of payment and how to get access to the offer. For example,

‘Managing International Collaboration (May 10 – May 13), a new course, is designed for CEOs, division presidents, and other senior-level executives who manage cross-border relationships. It examines the challenges of such collaborations, and provides concepts for maximizing the results of these interactions.’ (NT02)

‘As an American Express Cardmember, you’ll receive these exclusive privileges:...’ (AMEX08)

‘How it works is simple. Everytime you spend on the new Travel Rewards Card, you’ll earn points towards free flights and free hotel stays.’  
(AMEX11)

‘The Practical Business Writing Seminar is a three full day intensive seminar program (09:00 – 17:00 hrs).’ (TH14)



The writer tends to use present tense when describing the offer (see NT02 and TH14 above), and uses the future tense ‘will’ when explaining the benefit(s) the reader will receive from the offer, for example, ‘*you’ll receive these exclusive privileges*’ in AMEX08 and ‘*you’ll earn points towards free flights and free hotel stays*’ in AMEX11. There are also a number of compound nouns and adjectives, for example, ‘senior-level executives’, ‘concepts for maximizing the results of these interactions’ (NT02), ‘new Travel Rewards Card’, ‘free hotel stays’ (AMEX11), and ‘Practical Business Writing Seminar’, ‘three full day intensive seminar program’ (TH14). To make the letter compact yet informative, the writer normally uses these nominal groups to give a lot of details about the offer to the reader while keeping the sentence(s) short.

A combination of the you- and topic-orientations is used extensively in Move 2(ii). The mood type in the NT and TH letters is declarative only. However, the AMEX letters also have the imperative mood as presented in the examples below:

**‘Simply present** the voucher when ordering your meal **and pay** with the American Express Card and these dining privileges are yours. **Enjoy!**’ (AMEX09)

**‘Have a look** through all we are offering this season... then **treat yourself** to the festive break you and your family really deserve.’ (AMEX10)

The use of imperative here is for instruction (e.g. *simply present the voucher when ordering your meal and pay with the American Express Card...*), and persuasion or suggestion (see AMEX10 above). The imperative ‘*enjoy!*’ is presented with an exclamation mark. It simply creates some excitement to encourage the reader to take the offer. It may be noted that both styles of imperative mood (with and without an exclamation mark) are used only in the AMEX letters which have a unique advertising-oriented style.



## Move 2(iii) Indicating Value of the Offer

This sub-move mainly involves persuasive language since its main purpose is to capture the reader's attention and promote the sale. After introducing the product/service and giving its essential details, the writer is now trying to sell the offer. The significant linguistic features of Move 2(iii) include the extensive use of modal verbs 'can' and 'will' (the latter also marks future tense.). The modal verb 'can' is often used when the writer addresses 'you' the reader with an attempt to convince the reader that there are future possibilities that the offer can benefit him/her. For example,

'Here is a collection of some of Scotland's best loved, privately owned hotels that **can provide you** with a real, away from it all experience in the luxury and comfort you are undoubtedly looking for.' (NT06)

'It's easy! Every time you stay with Dusit Group or rent a car from AVIS, just settle your bill with the American Express Card, and **you can enjoy** great hospitality with exclusive privileges – and a chance to win!' (AMEX08)

The modal verb 'will' as future tense is used here to suggest 'promising' benefits. For example,

'I believe that the programme **will provide** a challenging and stimulating forum, yielding valuable insights into competitive behaviour in the financial services sector.' (NT03)

'Attentive service plus a broad selection of continental dishes on the a la carte menu offers you excellent dining in an elegant yet relaxed ambience your whole family **will enjoy**.' (AMEX07)

'Our programs **will help** you in all aspects of your professional and personal life.' (TH16)

This sub-move tends to revolve around the 'you-orientation'. The main mood type is declarative, but, like Move 2(ii), imperative is found in the AMEX letters. AMEX08 (see above) is a good example. It starts with the declarative '*it's easy!*' and ends with



‘...- *and a chance to win!*’ Note that both sentences are presented with an exclamation mark. The imperative phrase ‘*just settle your bill with the American Express Card*’ is in the middle. It is noticeable that the imperative verb ‘*settle*’ is mitigated by the adverb ‘*just*’. Here are two more AMEX examples with imperative mood:

‘**Remember**, every purchase counts.’ (AMEX10)

‘So, **enroll** now and you’ll have peace of mind knowing that you’ve done your best to protect yourself and your loved ones.’ (AMEX12)

Some AMEX letters obviously show the competitiveness of their offer by attacking their business rivals, for example,

‘No other card offers more and no other program will match the full range of rewards and privileges accorded an American Express Cardmember.’ (AMEX09)

‘No other card earns you free travel faster than the American Express Travel Rewards Card.’ (AMEX11)

This tactic is also found in one NT letter. In promoting 40 privately-owned hotels in Scotland, the writer says, ‘*Each is a far cry from the ubiquitous and often soulless modern hotels.*’ (NT06) in order to emphasize the uniqueness and competitiveness of the offer.

So far I have discussed the linguistic realisation of Move 2(i), (ii) and (iii). Now I will look at the linguistic realisation of Move 2 as a whole. It seems that the most important linguistic feature of the whole Move 2 is the appraisal items. As this move mainly concerned the product/service being offered, the writer tends to create a sense of persuasion through the appraisal of the quality of the product/service. It may be noted that Move 2(iii), *Indicating the Value of the Offer*, has made the most use of the appraisal items.

According to Rothery and Stenglin (2000), Martin (1994) first introduced an appraisal system network in his paper called ‘Beyond Exchange: APPRAISAL Systems in



English’ given at a presentation to Sydney Linguistics Circle at Macquarie University in Australia. (see also Martin 2000) Following Martin (1994), Eggins and Slade (1997) have conducted an appraisal analysis of casual conversation. The purpose of their analysis is to examine the attitudinal meanings of words used in conversation. As the nature of appraisal items in Move 2 contain ample attitudinal meanings similar to those found in conversation, I will take Eggins and Slade’s (1997) framework taken from Martin (1994) as the basis of the appraisal analysis undertaken in this part. Using Martin’s (1994) appraisal system network, Eggins and Slade (1997) agree that there are four main categories of appraisal:

1. ***Appreciation:** speakers’ reactions to and evaluations of reality.*
2. ***Affect:** speakers’ expression of emotional states, both positive and negative.*
3. ***Judgement:** speakers’ judgements about the ethics, morality, or social values of other people.*
4. ***Amplification:** the way speakers magnify or minimize the intensity and degree of the reality they are negotiating.* (ibid:125)

Their explanation of each category with examples is summarised in the following table:

**Table 4.5: Category of appraisal**

Category	Sub-category	Probe/test	Positive examples	Negative examples
1. <u>Appreciation</u> (what do you think of it?)	1.1 reaction	Mental process of cognition: I think/understand ...	wonderful, great, lovely, splendid	horrible, boring, ugly, dull, depressing
	1.2 composition	How did it go together?	harmonious, simple, elegant	discordant, complex, extravagant, overdone
	1.3 valuation	How did you judge it?	deep, meaningful, challenging, touching	shallow, meaningless, insignificant, irrelevant
2. <u>Affect</u> (how do you feel about it)	1.1 un/happiness	How happy did you feel?	happy, cheerful, joyous, buoyant	down, sad, miserable, distraught
	1.2 in/security	How secure did you feel?	together, confident, assured, composed	uneasy, anxious, freaked out, worried



	2.3 dis/satisfaction	How satisfied did you feel?	interested, absorbed, engrossed	tired, fed up, hate, exasperated
3. <u>Judgement</u> (how do you judge people's behaviour)	3.1 social sanction	How moral? How believable?	moral, upright, ethical, credible, believable	immoral, wrong, cruel, dishonest, weak
	3.2 social esteem	How strongly committed? How usual/destined? How able?	brave, strong, self-reliant lucky, blessed, fortunate, normal skilful, competent	cowardly, weak unfortunate, unlucky, cursed, odd incompetent
4. <u>Amplification</u> (general resources for grading)	4.1 enrichment	Fusing an evaluative lexical item with the process; Adding a comparative element	whinging, yapping all the time  to run like a bat out of hell	
	4.2 augmenting	Intensifying the evaluation; Quantifying the degree of amplification	repetition: ran and ran grading: very, really adverbial: heaps, much, a lot, totally pronominal: everyone	
	4.3 mitigation	Playing down the force of an evaluation	“vague” talk: sort of stuff, just, only, actually, not much	

(adapted from Eggins and Slade 1997:129-137)

Following Eggins and Slade’s (1997) framework outlined above, I have adjusted some points in order to apply it to my data. As the language of persuasion in the sales promotion letters normally conveys positive meaning, I will not focus on the negative side of appraisal. The revised presentation of the model of appraisal analysis is as follows:

1. *Appreciation: the writer’s reactions and evaluations.*
  - 1.1 *Reaction*
  - 1.2 *Composition*
  - 1.3 *Valuation*



2. *Affect: the writer's expression of emotional states.*
  - 2.1 *Happiness*
  - 2.2 *Security*
  - 2.3 *Satisfaction*
3. *Judgement: the writer's judgements about the ethics, morality, or social values expressed.*
  - 3.1 *social sanction*
  - 3.2 *social esteem*
4. *Amplification: the way the writer magnifies or minimizes the intensity and degree of the reality they are negotiating.*
  - 4.1 *enrichment*
  - 4.2 *augmenting*
  - 4.3 *mitigation*

The following appraisal analysis is aimed at classifying all appraisal items concerning the sales promotion in Move 2 in order to identify the category of appraisal most frequently used in the NT, AMEX and TH sales promotion letters. It is noticeable that most appraisal items are adjective epithets. To distinguish this point, the non-epithet appraisal items will be presented separately. Following Eggins and Slade (1997), the coding sheet in Appendix E illustrates the analysis of appraisal epithets in Move 2, *Introducing the Offer*.

In this analysis, there are 124 appraisal epithets found in Move 2 of the NT, AMEX and TH sales promotion letters. The coding sheet reveals that 88 appraisal adjectives are of 'appreciation' category, 11 are of 'judgement' category and 25 are of 'amplification' category. There is no appraisal epithet concerning the sales promotion that can be categorised as 'affect' (*the writer's expression of emotional states*). This is probably because the main purpose of sales promotion letters is to boost sales by emphasizing the benefits of the offer through the eyes of the reader, who is the potential customer. Thus the writer does not express his/her personal feelings. The



focus is on the product or service being offered and how to capture the reader’s interest. It should be noted that the sub-categories ‘social sanction’ under *Judgement*, ‘enrichment’ and ‘mitigation’ under *Amplification* are not found in the analysis. The results of the analysis of appraisal epithets in Move 2 are presented in the following table:

**Table 4.6: Results of the analysis of appraisal epithets**

Category of appraisal epithets	NT	AMEX	TH
1. Appreciation (88):			
1.1 Reaction (4)	3	0	1
1.2 Composition (20)	4	13	3
1.3 Valuation (64)	24	28	12
2. Judgement (11):			
2.1 Social sanction (0)	6	0	5
2.2 Social esteem (6)	0	0	0
3. Amplification (25):			
3.1 Enrichment (0)	0	0	0
3.2 Augmenting (25)	4	17	4
3.3 Mitigating (0)	0	0	0
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>25</i>

The highest number of appraisal epithets is found in the AMEX letters (58 epithets), followed by the NT letters (41 epithets) and the TH letters (25 epithets). Appreciation is most used by the three groups. Here Valuation is the most popular sub-category of Appreciation (e.g. NT05’s ‘*superior* hedge funds’, AMEX07’s ‘*excellent* dining’, TH17’s ‘*special* benefits’). Composition is mostly found in the AMEX letters (e.g. ‘*festive* privileges’, ‘*comprehensive* insurance plan’), whereas Reaction is mostly found in the NT letters (e.g. ‘*challenging* forum’, ‘*best-loved* hotels’). The AMEX letters use neither Reaction under Appreciation nor Social esteem under Judgement. They make an extensive use of Augmenting under Amplification (e.g. ‘*extra* protection’, ‘*wide* range of benefits’, and use many more superlatives (e.g. finest, fastest, highest) than the NT and TH letters. These seem to characterise the AMEX style.



Apart from Valuation under Appreciation, the TH letters tend to equally use every category. Comparing with the other two groups, the TH letters use more Social Esteem under Judgement (e.g. ‘highly experienced team’, ‘eminent practitioners’, ‘Thai-speaking experienced professionals’).

The non-epithet appraisal items are mainly adverbs. They can be analysed using the same model of analysis as that of appraisal epithets. It is interesting to see which category these non-epithets concerning the sales promotion in Move 2 mainly belong to. The following coding sheet illustrates the analysis of non-epithet appraisal items:

**Table 4.7: Results of the analysis of non-epithet modifiers**

Letter type & No.	Non-epithet modifiers	Appraised	Category	Sub-category
NT01	specially	priced (sailings)	Appreciation	valuation
NT02	greatly	increase	Amplification	augmenting
NT04	highly	interactive	Amplification	augmenting
NT06	especially	suitable (hotels)	Appreciation	valuation
AMEX08	just	settle	Amplification	mitigation
AMEX09	really	tasty dining privileges	Amplification	augmenting
	simply	present	Amplification	mitigation
AMEX10	truly	festive privileges	Amplification	augmenting
	really	deserve	Amplification	augmenting
AMEX12	also	receive	Amplification	augmenting
AMEX13	absolutely	free of charge	Amplification	augmenting
	simply	complete	Amplification	mitigation
TH16	highly	successful	Amplification	augmenting
	highly	experienced	Amplification	augmenting

These non-epithet appraisal items are grouped into 2 categories: Appreciation and Amplification. Only one sub-category of Appreciation; that is, Valuation, is found in two examples: ‘*specially* priced sailings’ and ‘*especially* suitable (hotels)’. Both ‘specially’ and ‘especially’ magnify the value of the appraised items. As for

Amplification, there are 2 subcategories: Augmenting and Mitigation. Augmenting can be regarded as the main function of the non-epithet appraisal items in this move. Mitigation is found in three examples: ‘*just* settle...’, ‘*simply* present...’ and another ‘*simply* present...’. The adverbs ‘just’ and ‘simply’ help mitigate the imperative ‘settle’ and ‘present’ in order to soften the tone of the sentences. Of all the three groups of letters, the AMEX letters make the most use of appraisal adverbs. Another appraisal feature worth mentioning here is the use of the verbal phrase ‘to ensure...’, for example,

‘Come from a wide range of expertise including environmental engineer, Health and Safety engineer, energy specialist, Environmental Management System (EMS) specialist, waste management specialist, water and soil specialist and socio-economic and policy researcher, these staff **are to ensure you that** we deliver you technical, holistic environmental scope of work.’ (TH19)

‘**To ensure** our Cardmembers, and their families, get just the break they are looking for, American Express has put together a package of truly festive privileges that last from now through January 15, 1999, **to ensure** you have plenty of time for a cracker of a Christmas and a very merry New Year.’ (AMEX10)

‘To ensure’ here is a verb form indicating the process in which the writer appraises his/her offer by promising the reader of the future benefits. Like appraisal adjectives and adverbs, it helps strengthen the value of the offer. Considering this point, it is also worth examining the last appraisal feature which is perhaps cultural-specific:

‘As Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn will be graciously pleased to preside over the Grand Opening of the Art Exhibition on March 27, 1997 at the exhibition hall, 18<sup>th</sup> floor Thai Wah Tower II, the buyers of these 6 paintings will then have the honour of personally presenting the donation directly to Her Royal Highness.’ (TH18)

The above example is considered as Move 2(iii) *Indicating value of the offer*. The Thai writer tries to promote the selling of some paintings for charity to the Thai reader. In Thailand, an opportunity to appear in front of the members of the royal family is considered as a mere honour for ordinary people. Here the writer appraises



the offer by emphasising the opportunity of the buyer to directly present the donation (payment for the paintings) to Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. This appraisal strategy which helps increase the value of the offer by giving such opportunity is rather cultural-specific than universal.

So far I have discussed the linguistic realisation of Move 2 both individually in terms of submoves (i), (ii) and (iii), and as a whole by focusing on the analyses of appraisal items as they are the most salient linguistic feature of Move 2. The findings give some insights into common and specific styles of sales promotion writing between the NT, AMEX and TH letters. Now we will move on to Move 3, *Offering Incentives*.

#### **4.4.3 Move 3 Offering Incentives**

After giving details and indicating the value of the offer, the writer further persuades the reader to consider the offer more seriously by giving some incentives such as discounts and special deals. As mentioned earlier, Bhatia (1993) found that bargaining plays an important role in the Singaporean business culture, and that offering incentives could be regarded as culturally specific rather than universal. However, unlike Bhatia's Singaporean letters, the TH letters do not have this move at all. Thus it would be better not to assume that offering incentives is used more in Asia than in the West. Bhatia (1993) briefly refers to the promotion of credit cards in the West saying that it often involves introductory offers, special offers and discounts. As a multinational credit card company, American Express (Thailand) seems to adopt this trend as well. All AMEX letters in my corpus use Move 3, *Offering Incentives*, extensively. Of all the three orientations, the you-orientation is mainly employed in this move as the writer wants to firmly capture the reader's attention. As for the linguistic realisation, one distinctive feature of this move is the way the writer introduces additional benefits, for example,

**‘These great savings aren’t the only reason** to use the American Express Card. For every Baht 1,000 you charge to the Card at participating hotels and resorts, you’ll have a chance to win...’ (AMEX08)

**‘Furthermore,** you can earn **additional rewards** from Membership Rewards program by using the American Express Card at every opportunity.’ (AMEX09)

**‘But that’s not all.** Apply now and you will be entitled to the following exclusive benefits:...’ (AMEX11)

**‘Here’s something else you’ll be glad to know** – as an American Express Cardmember, enrollment is simple in this high-level programme. There’s no need for a medical examination.’ (AMEX12)

**‘What’s more,** here’s **another** great opportunity to increase your level of protection. At a very special premium, you can increase your Accidental Death Cover up to Baht 3,000,000.’ (AMEX13)

The terms *‘furthermore’*, *‘additional’*, *‘something else’* and *‘another’* indicate that there are some additional bonuses for the reader. The expressions *‘what’s more’*, *‘but that’s not all’* and *‘these great savings aren’t the only reason’* signal the same thing. These terms and expressions are used to promptly capture the reader’s attention before the writer gives the details of the incentives typically in the form of a reduction or a bonus, or a promising chance to win something. The modal verbs ‘will’ and ‘can’ are used widely in this move, in relation to the you-orientation (promising further benefits to *you*, the reader). The mood type is mainly declarative. Only a few imperatives are found, for example, *‘Apply now and you will be entitled to the following exclusive benefits’* in AMEX11 above, and the following:

**‘Take** your short break **before October 25** to enjoy our Festival of Scotch Lamb, when participating hotels will be serving specially selected Scotch lamb to discerning diners.’ (NT06)

The purpose of these imperatives is not to order but to directly invite the reader to take the offer. The tone is softened by the fact that the description of the incentives



(which, of course, aim to benefit the reader) follows the imperatives right away. There is another interesting feature in NT06 above. When the writer encourages the reader to take the offer before a specified deadline, Bhatia (1993) tends to consider it as Move 6, *Using Pressure Tactics*. However, in NT06, although there is a specified deadline, the writer does not seem to put any pressure on the reader. Instead, the additional bonus (*specially selected Scotch lamb*) is highlighted as an incentive for the reader who takes the offer within that period of time. The specified date shows a constraint on the offer. Another example is from another NT letter as follows:

‘Reservations with payment received **prior to 25<sup>th</sup> April 1997** will qualify for a fee reduction, as will reservations of two or more places from the same organisation.’ (NT05)

Again, the highlight here is on the incentive ‘*a fee reduction*’. To illustrate it more clearly, it is worth looking at the following example from Move 6, *Using Pressure Tactics*:

‘Hurry! To take advantage of this exclusive opportunity to provide extra protection for your loved ones, you must return the attached Acceptance From (sic.) **before December 31, 1998.**’ (AMEX07)

It is noticeable that in this example the writer puts some pressure on the reader. The deadline is emphasized here and seems much more crucial than those in the previous two examples. I shall discuss the linguistic realisation of Move 6 later on. This is just to show the difference between the use of deadlines in Move 3 and Move 6. The last linguistic feature is the occasional use of appraisal items. Similar to those in Move 2, these appraisal items are mostly epithets which can be divided into two categories. They belong to ‘Appreciation’ in the sub-category of ‘Valuation’, for example, ‘*specially selected Scotch lamb*’ (NT06), ‘*unique privilege*’ and ‘*delicious dining*’ (AMEX07), ‘*exclusive benefits*’ (AMEX11), and ‘*special premium*’ (AMEX13). Please note that ‘*specially*’ in NT06 is an appraisal adverb that modifies the epithet ‘selected’. It also belongs to ‘Appreciation’ in the sub-category of ‘Valuation’. The epithets which belong to ‘Amplification’ in the sub-category of ‘Augmenting’ are

such as ‘*substantial* savings’ (NT01), ‘*great* savings’ (AMEX08), ‘*high-level* programme’ (AMEX12) and ‘*great* opportunity’ (AMEX13). These appraisal epithets help strengthen the incentives which are one of the effective sale promotion strategies.

#### 4.4.4 Move 4 Enclosing Documents

It is quite common for the writer of a sales promotion letter to enclose brochures, leaflets, request or application forms. These documents often involve detailed descriptions of the offer for the interested reader to consider it further and perhaps make a move towards taking the offer. The writer usually states in the letter that there is an attachment. The most frequently used linguistic feature for this move is the verb ‘to enclose’ which can be found in different forms as follows:

‘Please find this course’s brochure and application **enclosed**.’ (NT02)

‘I am pleased **to enclose** a copy of the programme for this year’s Fairplace Banking Summer School, to be held in Cambridge on ...’ (NT03)

‘We **are enclosing** a copy of the brochure for each program for your review and action.’ (NT04)

‘The forty hotels featured in the **enclosed** Escape brochure are all members of a unique group that is based on quality – quality accommodation, quality food and quality service.’ (NT06)

‘So if your have not yet applied for the Card, please complete the **enclosed** application and return it immediately to us to enjoy the first year free offer.’ (AMEX11)

‘I take the liberty of **enclosing** the pictures of these special 6 paintings for your review and hope that they will meet with your interest.’ (TH18)

‘Attached please find the **enclosed** company profile of ERM today and ERM-Siam capability statements on ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) for your information.’ (TH20)



The main mood types are imperative and declarative. The imperative mood type is usually found with the politeness marker ‘please’ as in ‘*please find this course’s brochure and application enclosed*’ (NT02) and ‘*attached please find the enclosed company profile of ERM today...*’ (TH20). The term ‘attached’ here has the same function as the verb ‘enclose’; that is, to inform the reader of the documents enclosed with the cover letter. Only one AMEX letter uses imperative on its own: ‘*read all about your benefits in the Enrollment Form.*’ (AMEX12). In NT02 and NT03 the writers also put ‘Enclosures’ and ‘Enc.’ respectively at the end of the letters after their signatures. In TH19 below, the writer does not indicate this move in the body text, but puts ‘Enclosure’ at the end of the letter together with the brief details of the documents enclosed:

‘Enclosure: Asia Pacific Environmental Resources management group  
Cleaner Production in the Transition Economics  
Investing for the Environment’ (TH19)

It is interesting that in this move the writer often states what sort of documents is enclosed (e.g. brochure, company profile, application form), as you can see from all examples above. Sometimes the writer also expresses the purpose(s) for enclosing those documents, for example,

‘We are enclosing a copy of the brochure for each program **for your review and action.**’ (NT04)

‘I take the liberty of enclosing the pictures of these special 6 paintings **for your review** and hope that they will meet with your interest.’ (TH18)

‘Attached please find the enclosed company profile of ERM ... **for your information.**’ (TH20)

It should be noted that 50% of the clauses representing this move also contain other moves especially Move 2 and Move 5. The examples are as follows:

### **Move 4 and Move 2(i), *Offering Product or Service***

‘I am pleased to enclose a copy of the programme for this year’s Fairplace Banking Summer School, to be held in Cambridge on 3-8 August.’ (NT02)

The term ‘*enclose a copy of the programme*’ indicates Move 4 whereas the whole clause represents both Move 4 and Move 2(i) at the same time.

### **Move 4 and Move 2(iii), *Indicating Value of the Offer***

‘The forty hotels featured in the enclosed Escape brochure are all members of a unique group that is based on quality – quality accommodation, quality food and quality service.’ (NT06)

### **Move 4 and Move 5, *Soliciting Response***

‘So if your have not yet applied for the Card, please complete the enclosed application and return it immediately to us to enjoy the first year free offer.’ (AMEX11)

The clauses representing both Move 4 and Move 2 (*Introducing the Offer*) are always at the beginning of the letter whereas those representing Move 4 and Move 5 are typically at the end of the letter. The terms ‘*the enclosed Escape brochure*’ (NT06) and ‘*the enclosed application*’ (AMEX11) are the key words referring to Move 4, *Enclosing Documents*. It may be noted that there is no significant linguistic difference in this move between the NT, AMEX and TH letters.

#### **4.4.5 Move 5 Soliciting Response**

In this move, the writer often includes a specific telephone number and/or the name of the contact person in order to encourage response. Bhatia (1993:54) points out that this move is characterised by ‘a rather extravagant use of politeness markers and by its promise of a free, no-obligation and most often personalized service’. My data also confirms Bhatia’s viewpoint. Soliciting response is found in every letter in my corpus. The most important linguistic realisation of this move is through the use of ‘If-clause’ with the politeness marker ‘please’. The mood type is mainly imperative



in which the imperative verbs are often preceded by the politeness marker ‘please’.

For example,

‘**If** you would like to register for the Summer School, **please contact** my colleague, Linda Mantle, as indicated on page 10 of the programme.’ (NT03)

‘**If** you would like more information about these programs, **please contact** us via Internet at our e-mail address:... or by fax in the U.S.A. at ...’ (NT04)

‘**If** you are concerned about coming market corrections, and would like to consider hedged managers whose records indicate strong returns with controlled risk, **please call** me at ..., fax to ... or e-mail to ...’ (NT05)

‘**Please do not hesitate to contact** me, if you need more information.’ (TH15)

‘**Should** you require further particulars regarding our residential courses, **please do not hesitate to contact** the undersigned on (02) 247-5720-9, ...’ (TH16)

The last example above uses ‘should’ instead of ‘if’, but its function is the same as the ‘If-clause’. The verbs ‘to contact’ and ‘to call’ are used extensively in this move. It may be noted that the term ‘more information’, as in NT04 and TH15 above, is another important linguistic realisation of Move 5. It can be in the form of the formulaic expressions ‘for more information’ and ‘for more details’ presented in the imperative clauses ‘please call...’ or ‘please contact...’, for example:

‘**For more information** about these or any of our Executive Education programs, **please call** us at ..., Ext. 175, or fax us at ....’ (NT02)

‘**For more details, please contact** our Customer Service on ....’ (AMEX08)

‘**For more information, please call** our Customer Service on ....’ (AMEX09)

**‘For more information, please call Khun Dhanu or Khun Ornanong at ... today.’ (AMEX12)**

**‘For more information about these locations and/or Felix Card benefits, please contact our Bangkok Reservations Centre. Tel: ... Fax: ...’ (TH17)**

In addition, we can see from the above examples that this move can be realised by the specific telephone and/or fax number, and/or email address, sometimes with the name of the contact person, if not ‘we’ or ‘I’, the writer. The you-orientation is used widely together with the we-orientation. Since the writer wants the reader to respond, he/she tends to highlight ‘you’, the reader, in this move. Apart from extensive use of ‘you’ and/or ‘your’, the imperatives, such as ‘please call/please contact’ also imply that the writer is addressing the reader. Sometimes these imperatives are not preceded by the politeness marker ‘please’, for example,

**‘Come and experience it all with Scotland’s Hotels of Distinction. Call free on ... to make your booking for a special break at a special hotel.’ (NT06)**

**‘To enroll, just return the correctly completed Enrollment Form in the pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope.’ (AMEX12)**

**‘If you wish to enjoy this added protection, simply tick “YES” on the Acceptance Form and indicate the level of cover you require.’ (AMEX13)**

The first example with *‘come and experience it all’* and *‘call free’* is rather like a promotional slogan, which does not need the politeness marker ‘please’. The other two examples contain the mitigation adverbs *‘just’* and *‘simply’* which soften the tone of the imperatives. Beside the imperative clauses, the mood type ‘declarative’ is also found in 4 TH letters as follows:

**‘Due to the limited number of available seats, we would appreciate it if you could send in your application to ... as soon as possible.’ (TH14, also including Move 6)**



‘Reservation may be made at anytime with Ms. Potchanart at telephone number ... ext. 238 who will record each order on a first-come-first-served basis.’ (TH18)

‘We would be grateful for the opportunity to assist you in your future projects and ask if you could kindly include us on to your consultancy study invitation list. We would be happy to provide any further information to support this application.’ (TH19)

‘We would be pleased to meet with you and discuss any queries that you may have.’ (TH20)

The TH letters use both imperative and declarative mood types in this move. From the examples above, it seems that the declarative mood type is used when the writer wants to include more specific details or personalize the request for response.

In addition to the above-mentioned linguistic features, Move 5, *Soliciting Response*, is enhanced by the fact that sometimes it does not cost the reader anything to respond; for example, free telephone call (NT06) and the use of postage-paid envelope (AMEX12). There is no distinctive linguistic difference between the NT, AMEX and TH letters. Although in my corpus the TH letters use both imperative and declarative mood types while the NT and AMEX are found with only the imperative mood type, it cannot be assumed that the latter will not use the declarative mood type in this move at all. It is noticeable that the imperative clause without ‘please’ is only found in the NT and AMEX letters.

#### 4.4.6 Move 6 Using Pressure Tactics

Bhatia (1993:55) states that the main focus of *using pressure tactics* is to push the already inclined or half-inclined customer to take an immediate decision. This move is found in 5 out of 7 AMEX letters, 3 out of 6 NT letters and only 1 out of 7 TH letters. It is mainly realised by the expression of urgency that forces the reader to take a prompt action. For example,

‘Please note that **the application deadline** is six weeks in advance of the start of each course.’ (NT02)

‘**But don’t delay...**make your bookings **now** on 253-0355-7 **as we cannot extend this superlative privilege.**’ (AMEX07)

‘**Hurry!** To take advantage of this exclusive opportunity to provide extra protection for your loved ones, you **must return** the attached Acceptance From (sic.) before December 31, 1998.’ (AMEX13)

‘Due to **the limited number of available seats**, we would appreciate it if you could send in your application to 618-6869 **as soon as possible.**’ (TH14)

The terms ‘*application deadline*’ (NT02), ‘*now*’ and ‘*we cannot extend..*’ (AMEX07) as well as ‘*as soon as possible*’ (TH14) signal immediate action. The mood types can be imperative as in NT02, AMEX07, and declarative as in TH14 and AMEX13 above. Also ‘*Hurry!*’ in AMEX13 is of the mood type *imperative*, but it presented with an exclamation mark to create a sense of excitement and urgency. Some imperatives are preceded by the politeness marker ‘please’ such as ‘*please note that...*’ in NT02 whereas the AMEX letters tend to use imperative verbs on their own, for example, ‘but *don’t delay...make* your bookings now...’ (AMEX07) and ‘*Hurry!*’ (AMEX13). The modal verb ‘must’ is also used as in ‘*you must return...*’ (AMEX13). Another distinctive linguistic feature in this move is the specified deadline. As discussed earlier, it is not necessary that the deadline always indicates Move 6, *Using Pressure Tactics*, as it can also mark Move 3, *Offering Incentives*. Using pressure tactics is aimed at showing the limitations of the offer in term of quantity (e.g. ‘*due to the limited number of available seats*’ in TH14) and often with reference to a limited period of time as in ‘*you must return the attached Attachment From (sic.) before December 31, 1998*’ in AMEX13. Bhatia (1993) claims that this move generally occurs towards the end of the letter. However, in some AMEX letters, this move is found at the beginning of the letter as part of the headline, for example:



**‘Great Savings...up to 50% on an enjoyable holiday at Dusit, Royal Princess and Thani Hotels & Resort and AVIS from now until October 31, 1998.’ (AMEX08)**

**‘Superb dining...At Suberb Savings 30-50% Discount From Now Till August 31, 1998 Only.’ (AMEX09)**

Also this move can be found in the postscript (p.s.) at the very end of the letter after the writer’s signature, for example, ‘P.S. *Please complete and return your Enrollment Form before June 30, 1998 for the Baht 6,000,000 PrivilegeCare.*’ (AMEX12) The we-, you- and topic-orientations are employed here. As there are not many examples of this move, it is difficult to see whether there is any important linguistic difference between the three groups of letters. However, my data reveal that the AMEX letters use this move most extensively in a variety of styles. Many of them use ‘bold imperative’ (imperative without the politeness marker ‘please’), and sometimes imitate an exclamation by adding an exclamation mark at the end. They frequently include this move in headings and postscripts.

#### **4.4.7 Move 7 Ending Politely**

Bhatia (1993:55) states, ‘sales promotion letters invariably end on a polite, pleasant and courteous note.’ He claims that this move marks the close. Gan (1989) reports that 100% of sales promotion letters use this move in his study of closings in business letters. However, ending politely is found in 3 out of 6 NT letters and 4 out of 7 TH letters. The AMEX letters do not use this move to mark the close at all. The only mood type, *declarative*, is found. *Ending politely* is generally realised by an expression of thankfulness or gratitude to the reader. The following examples are considered as *elliptical declarative* as they omit the subject (e.g. I or we).

**‘Thank you for your continued support.’ (TH17)**

**‘Thank you very much** for your consideration and we look forward to working with you in the future.’ (TH19)

**‘Thank you very much** for your consideration.’ (TH20)

It may be noted that the TH letters tend to use formulaic expressions such as ‘thank you (very much) for your support and/or for your consideration’ as shown above. In the NT letters, the writer tends to end with a polite, cordial note such as ‘*With best wishes for the upcoming holiday season.*’ (NT04). This move can also be realised by a pleasant and courteous note showing the company’s or the writer’s enthusiasm to serve the reader in the future, e.g.,

‘I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you at Cambridge this August.’ (NT03)

‘We very much look forward to welcoming you soon.’ (NT06)

‘We look forward to serving you, ERM-SIAM, CO LTD. Clients in very soon.’ (TH15)

As for the linguistic realisation, the terms such as ‘I hope’, ‘we look forward to...’ mark the polite ending with the writer’s expectation to initiate further business contacts or business relations with the potential customer. The we- and you-orientations are widely used. It is interesting that the NT letters seem to have more variety of the ‘ending politely’ techniques whereas the TH letters tend to favour the use of expressions of gratitude.

In this section, I have discussed how each move is realised in terms of mood type, orientation, and other salient linguistic features. A summary is displayed in the following tables:



**Table 4.8: Mood types**

<u>Move</u>	NT Mood Type(s)	AMEX Mood Type(s)	TH Mood Type(s)
<b>Move 1 Establishing credentials</b>	Declarative	Declarative	Declarative
<b>Move 2 Introducing the offer</b>	Declarative	Declarative Imperative without ‘please’ occasionally with an exclamation mark	Declarative
<b>Move 3 Offering incentives</b>	Declarative	Declarative Imperative	N/A
<b>Move 4 Enclosing documents</b>	Declarative Imperative with ‘please’	Declarative Imperative without ‘please’	Declarative Imperative with ‘please’
<b>Move 5 Soliciting response</b>	Imperative with ‘please’ Imperative without ‘please’	Imperative with ‘please’ Imperative without ‘please’	Imperative with ‘please’ Declarative
<b>Move 6 Using pressure tactics</b>	Declarative Imperative with ‘please’	Declarative Imperative with ‘please’ Imperative without ‘please’ (occasionally with an exclamation mark)	Declarative
<b>Move 7 Ending politely</b>	Declarative	N/A	Declarative (mostly elliptical)

The mood type most frequently used in each move is *declarative* except in Move 5, *Soliciting Response*, where *imperative* is mainly found either with or without the politeness marker ‘please’. The imperative mood type is found in Move 4 and 5 of the three groups of letters. It is also found in Move 6 of the NT letters, and Move 2, 3 and 6 of the AMEX letters. Note that *imperative* with an exclamation mark is only found in Move 2 and 6 in the AMEX letters in which a combination of *declarative* and *imperative* are used extensively. The TH letters make an extensive use of ‘declarative’ because even in Move 5, *Soliciting Response*, where the NT and AMEX

letters use only ‘imperative’, four of the seven TH letters use ‘declarative’ as presented earlier. The TH letters tend to use stock expressions when it comes to ‘imperative’ as in their Move 4, i.e., *Attached please find...*(TH20) and Move 5, i.e., *Please do not hesitate to contact...*(TH15) or *If-clause + please contact...*(TH17). Perhaps this indicates a cultural-specific pattern because in Thai the use of ‘imperative’ is limited and only presented in certain formulaic forms. When the Thais write in English, they tend to be very careful with their written English, and thus little diversity is found in pure Thai letters. On the other hand, the AMEX letters, which have an American-influenced-Thai style, are much more diverse in terms of the mood types as we can see from the above table.

There is no difference in the use of the orientations among the NT, AMEX, and TH letters, we shall consider them as a whole and compare them across each move. A combination of the we-, you- and topic-orientations is mainly used in most moves. In Move 3, *Offering Incentives*, the you-orientation is used most extensively because after introducing the offer, the writer moves on to persuade the reader by offering direct additional bonus or discounts which are designed specifically for this particular reader who might be a prospective customer. It should also be noted that Move 5 and 7 contain only we- and you-orientations. This may be because *soliciting response* and *ending politely* involve only the writer and the reader. In Move 5, *Soliciting Response*, the writer makes an attempt to get a reply from the reader. In Move 7, *Ending Politely*, the writer expresses his/her thankfulness to the reader with a courteous note initiating further business relationships in the future. The next table will display some salient linguistic features found in each move.



**Table 4.9: Salient linguistic features**

<b>Move</b>	<b>Salient Linguistic Features</b>
<i>Move 1 Establishing credentials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- highlights of the company's expertise and success with the key terms such as 'worldwide', 'leading company', 'excellent (product/service), often found in the 'we-orientation' style</li><li>- the writer's perception of the interest/needs of the reader, always in the 'you-orientation' style</li></ul>
<i>Move 2 Introducing the offer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the verb forms 'to offer', 'to tell', 'to let you know' (about the offer)</li><li>- (the offer) 'is designed for'</li><li>- the nominal groups (compound nouns and adjectives)</li><li>- the modal verbs 'can' and 'will'</li><li>- extensive use of appraisal items</li></ul>
<i>Move 3 Offering incentives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- indicators of additional bonus, discounts or extra benefits, i.e., 'furthermore', 'additional', 'something else', 'another' (benefit)</li><li>- occasional use of appraisal items</li></ul>
<i>Move 4 Enclosing documents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- verb 'to enclose'</li><li>- abbreviation 'Enc.' or noun 'Enclosure(s)' at the end of the letter</li><li>- formulaic expression '(attached/enclosed) please find...' often used with the phrase 'for your information/review/action'</li></ul>
<i>Move 5 Soliciting response</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 'If-clause' with the imperative (often found with the politeness marker 'please'): 'please contact/call/do not hesitate to contact...'</li><li>- the imperative clauses beginning with the phrase 'for your information/details, please contact/call...'</li><li>- the name of the contact person with telephone/fax numbers and/or email address</li></ul>
<i>Move 6 Using pressure tactics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the word 'deadline'</li><li>- the adverbs 'now', 'as soon as possible'</li><li>- the modal verb 'must'</li><li>- the closing date indicating the end of the special offer</li></ul>

<i>Move 7 Ending politely</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the phrase ‘Thank you (very much) for your consideration/support’</li> <li>- the verb phrase ‘to look forward to...(serving you)’</li> </ul>
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All this linguistic realisation is based on the data used in this sales promotion analysis. The mood types, orientations and salient linguistic features are the main source of the linguistic realisation of each move found in this study. Those linguistic elements ranging from lexical, syntactic and semantic features discussed in this section form an open-ended basis of how the moves are realised in the sales promotion letter. In the next section, I will discuss the overall results of the move analysis and suggest some changes or modifications with reference to those results.

### 4.5 Discussion of the Results of Move Analysis

The results of move analysis of my data seem to suggest that there is a gap in Bhatia’s (1993) pattern of moves. This is simply because it does not have universal features that can be applied to efficiently determine the moves of all sales promotion letters. From my results, there are a few major findings that should be taken into consideration in the overall move analysis of sales promotion letters. They are presented and discussed as follows:

#### 4.5.1 The Use of Move 1 and the Functions of the Opening Move

According to Bhatia (1993), Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, is obligatory. However, the way to define this move in some letters can be controversial. In Bhatia’s only sample letter (1993: 48), he classifies the clause ‘*We are expertly aware that international financial managers need to be able to ask the right questions and work in the market place with confidence*’ as Move 1, *Establishing credentials*. He claims that the term ‘*We are expertly aware...*’ indicates the expertise of the company, and that the writer implies that his/her company can fulfil those needs of



the reader. We can see that his example is *establishing needs* rather than *credentials*. Because of its ambiguity, it could or could not be regarded as *establishing credentials*, depending on the reader's point of view. A clearer example is from my data as presented in Sample 1 in Section 3.2. Its following extract indicates Move 2 and possibly implies Move 1:

**'The Harvard Business School's Focused Management Courses provide a highly charged one- to two-week educational experience led by senior Harvard Business School faculty members – some of the foremost innovators in their fields.'** (NT02)

The terms 'senior' and 'some of the foremost innovators in their fields' can imply the expertise of the company although it could be regarded merely as Move 2(iii), *Indicating the value of the offer*. I have already discussed some explicit examples of Move 1 in Section 3.3. It may be noted again that this move is found in only 50% of the NT letters, 28.5% of the AMEX letters, and 42.8% of the TH letters. Although Bhatia emphasizes that well-established organisations and multinational companies always establish their credentials at the beginning of the letters, this move is infrequently used by American Express, which is a well-established multinational company. It can be argued that the AMEX letters are normally addressed to existing customers. However, in my corpus most well-established organisations (e.g. Harvard University, American Express) do not use this move presumably because they are already well-known and prominent. My finding suggests that this move is optional rather than obligatory, and it seems to be less likely among well-established organisations and multinational companies.

Bhatia (1993) states that *Establishing credentials* is obligatory and often used as the opening move. However, my analysis reveals that the opening move can have a variety of functions. It can express gratitude/reward, flattery, or just simply state the purposes of the letter. The examples of these functions are as follows:

**Gratitude/Reward**

- *This is our way of saying ‘Thank you’ for using American Express Card. (AMEX08)*
- *To say ‘many thanks’ to you for using the American Express Card we’re offering you a spread of really tasty dining privileges. (AMEX09)*

**Flattery**

- *I’m writing to tell you of a comprehensive insurance plan that has been designed for Cardmembers with high financial standings like yourself. (AMEX12)*
- *We are pleased to have you as a member of our Felix Card Club. (TH17)*

**Purposes**

- *Impro Company Limited is happy to invite you and your staff to our ‘Practical Business Writing Seminar’... (TH14)*
- *We are pleased to submit our special rates to ERM-SIAM, CO. LTD. For long staying (Monthly) and F.I.T. as follows... (TH15)*
- *We are writing to you to introduce ourselves as one of the leading companies providing environmental consultancy business in Thailand. (TH19)*

According to these various functions, Move 1 should be renamed using a more general term. In this case, as an appropriate term could not be found, I shall propose to call it ‘Opening a link’. This term can cover all functions mentioned above including *Establishing credentials*, which is now regarded as optional.

**Table 4.10: Functions of Move 1**

MOVE	Possible Functions
Opening a link	Establishing Credentials Conveying Gratitude/Reward Expressing Flattery Stating Purposes



4.5.2 The Re-Structure of Move 2

Bhatia (1993) introduces three aspects of Move 2: *Offering the product or service*, *Essential detailing of the offer*, and *Indicating value of the offer*. In the light of my data, this move should include all aspects of the product or service. This can be done by dividing Move 2 into different steps. It would be more effective if Move 3, *Offering incentives*, and Move 4, *Enclosing documents*, were included in Move 2 since they directly involve the product/service. Bhatia’s (1993) pattern of Move 2 and the proposed new structure are presented in the following tables:

Table 4.11: Bhatia’s pattern of Move 2

Move 2 Introducing the offer	
(i) Offering the product or service	Obligatory
(ii) Essential detailing of the offer	Obligatory
(iii) Indicating value of the offer	Optional

Table 4.12: Proposed new pattern of Move 2

Move 2	Introducing the offer	
Step 1	Offering the product or service	Obligatory
Step 2	Essential detailing of the offer	Obligatory
Step 3	Enclosing documents	Optional
Step 4	Indicating value of the offer	Optional
Step 5	Offering incentives	Optional

The re-structure of Move 2 aims to facilitate the process of move realisation by combining all aspects of product/service together and transforming minor moves (Move 3 & 4), which involve the product/service, into steps. This leads to a more effective pattern of moves for sales promotion letters.

### 4.5.3 The Use of Move 7 as a Closing Move

Bhatia (1993) and Gan (1989) claim that Move 7, *Ending politely*, serves as a closing move. However, it is only found in 50% of the NT letters, 42.8% of the TH letters, and is not found in any AMEX letters. Instead of ‘ending politely’, AMEX letters are likely to have an ending with ‘urgent’ and ‘motivating’ message, for example, ‘*But don’t delay...make your bookings now on 253-0355-7 as we cannot extend this superlative privilege. And, once you’ve taken advantage of this unique American Express and Siam Inter-Continental Hotel offer once...you’ll want to repeat the experience, for sure*’. (AMEX07) Even some NT letters try a similar technique, for example, ‘*Please note that the application deadline is six weeks in advance of the start of each course*’. (NT02) The expected polite ending seems to be replaced with Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*, in a number of letters in my data. This change might suggest a new trend of the closing move in sales promotion letters.

### 4.5.4 The Use of Postscript

The TH letters do not use any heading or postscript. This supports Zhu’s (2000a) findings which suggest that headings and postscripts are typically English because neither of them is found in the Chinese sales letters in her analysis. In my corpus, every AMEX letter uses a heading, and so do 2 out of 6 NT letters. Most headings outline and highlight the offer and are normally written in bold fonts. A postscript is found in every AMEX letter and 2 (out of 6) NT letters. Bhatia (1993) did not mention the use of postscript in his analysis. However, it is essential to consider the functions of the postscript in sales promotion letters because it contains extra message at the end of the letter which can be considered as a closing move. Its functions can be summarised into three aspects as follows:



### **1. To remind the reader about the benefits of the offer**

- 'P.S. Every time you charge to the American Express Card, you earn Membership Reward points for accumulation towards a wide variety of free rewards.' (AMEX07)
- 'P.S. For every Baht 25 charged to the Card you'll also receive one Membership Reward points which you can redeem for valuable rewards. The more you use the Card, the faster you can earn a prize.' (AMEX08)

### **2. To cover the company legally as a legal caveat**

- 'P.S. Please read the Terms & Conditions on the back of each voucher.' (AMEX07 & 09)
- 'P.S. \* Thai air tickets must be purchased at THAI ticketing offices or leading travel agents. \*\* The annual fee for the second year and onward will be Baht 2,150 for the basic card and Baht 1,350 for each Supplementary Card (excluding VAT).' (AMEX11)

### **3. To be used as *Soliciting response* and/or *Using pressure tactics***

- 'P.S. Please complete and return your Enrollment Form before June 30, 1998 for the Baht 6,000,000 PrivilegeCare – The Accident Protector Plan. For more information, please call ... today.' (AMEX12)
- 'P.S. To accept your free Baht 50,000 Accidental Death Cover, you must return the correctly complete Acceptance Form by mail or fax to ... before December 31, 1998.' (AMEX13)
- 'P.S. While the standard 5% Crystal Society discount will not apply to most of these cruises (it will be valid for the November 30, 1997 South American Society cruise), the savings are substantial enough so that staterooms are sure to go quickly. Please call your travel agent as soon as possible to reserve the stateroom of your choice!' (NT01)

Zhu (2000a) reports similar findings about the postscript in English sales promotion letters. She states,

The postscript reiterates the request, the pressure tactics, and various types of incentive the letter offers. All the points involved in the postscript are meant to arouse the reader's desire to own the product and encourage action. Without reading the rest of the letter, the reader already knows what the letter is about. In addition, the postscripts are also a reminder of the immediate benefit if the reader responds quickly, thus reinforcing the purpose of urging the reader to act quickly. (ibid:57)

It is interesting that there is a big difference in the two groups of letters written by Thai speakers. No heading or postscript is found in the TH letters which are considered as pure Thai promotional writing style. On the contrary, both heading and postscript are found in every AMEX letter which reflects the American-influenced-Thai promotional writing style. In conclusion, the use of heading and postscript is significant and meaningful. My findings suggest that moves in the heading and postscript should be included in the analysis of sales promotion letters.

These major findings discussed above are worth considering while identifying the pattern of moves in sales promotion letters. Bhatia’s (1993) pattern of moves can be presented in the table below:

**Table 4.13: Bhatia’s (1993) Pattern of Moves**

Move 1	Establishing credentials	Obligatory
Move 2	Introducing the offer	
	(i) Offering the product or service	Obligatory
	(ii) Essential detailing of the offer	Obligatory
	(iii) Indicating value of the offer	Optional
Move 3	Offering incentives	Optional
Move 4	Enclosing documents	Optional
Move 5	Soliciting response	Obligatory
Move 6	Using pressure tactics	Optional
Move 7	Ending politely	Optional (but found in most letters)

According to my findings, the pattern of moves needs to be re-structured for a more efficient move analysis. Thus I would like to propose a modified pattern of moves as follows:



**Table 4.14: Modified pattern of moves**

Move 1	Opening a link	Obligatory
Move 2	Introducing the offer	
Step 1	Offering the product or service	Obligatory
Step 2	Essential detailing of the offer	Obligatory
Step 3	Enclosing documents	Optional
Step 4	Indicating value of the offer	Optional
Step 5	Offering incentives	Optional
Move 3	Soliciting response	Obligatory
Move 4	Using pressure tactics	Optional
Move 5	Ending politely	Optional

The above pattern is aimed at filling the gap that occurs in Bhatia’s (1993) pattern of moves in order to represent the rhetorical moves and steps more universally. Following this analysis, it was interesting to note that Hiranburana’s (1996) analysis of sales promotion letters was developed along similar lines. Hiranburana’s (1996) corpus consists of samples of business correspondence from twenty companies in Thailand and eleven companies in Australia. From her sales promotion data of 33 letters, 6 faxes and 1 telex written by Thais (TH), native speakers of English (NE), and non-native speakers of English non-Thais (NNENT), she develops 2 patterns of rhetorical moves for a) letters, b) faxes and telex, based on Swales’ (1990) move analysis in the introductions of scientific articles and Bhatia’s (1991; 1993) genre analysis of sales promotion letters. As her analysis of the faxes and telex is based on a very small corpus of 7 items all written by native speakers of English, I will point out only her move analysis of the 33 letters. Hiranburana’s pattern of moves in sales promotion letters is presented below:

Opening salutation

- Move 1 Establish a Link
- Step 1 Acknowledging source of contact information

Move 2 Establishing Confidence

- Step 1 Emphasising company's credentials and/or
- Step 2 Making good impressions

Move 3 Introducing Offer(s)

- Step 1 Offering product(s)/service(s) and/or
- Step 2 Detailing offer(s) and/or
- Step 3 Indicating the value of offer(s) and/or
- Step 4 Offering incentives

Move 4 Inviting Further Contact

- Step 1 Encouraging pursuit of further information and/or
- Step 2 Expressing expectation of future reply/custom

Closing salutation

(ibid:173)

Her study seems to focus on the similarities between the TH, NE and NNENT letters since it does not reveal any significant difference among those letters at all. The move order or sequencing, and move flexibility were not reviewed, and little linguistic realisation was discussed. The above pattern of moves could not be applied efficiently to my data. Although Hiranburana calls her Move 1, '*Establishing a Link*', its step is totally different from mine. None of my letters do refer to the source of contact information, which is considered here as Step 1 in Move 1. Hiranburana (1996:174) states, 'Most of the TH, NE, and NNENT referred to such a source of information as specialised directories, magazines, and government offices including the embassies or the chamber of commerce'. This is quite different from my data.

It may be noted that her Move 2, *Establishing Confidence*, is divided into 2 steps although there is no clear definition for Step 2, *Making Good Impressions*. By examining her samples of this step, it can be concluded that this step involves the general description of the company's business without an explicit attempt to establish the company's credentials. Again, this cannot be applied to my data. However, the interesting point is that 5 out of 7 TH letters have Step 1, *Emphasising Credentials*, compared to 3 out of 7 TH letters in my corpus. This means that the common trait of the TH sales promotion letters may be difficult to identify in terms of establishing credentials. Only 50% of the letters written by native speakers of English in her data



have this step, which helps confirm that Bhatia's (1993) claim about this step being obligatory is debatable.

Hiranburana (1996:177) does not regard 'enclosing documents' as a move or step by explaining that 'the sample in the present research, however, suggested that it should be regarded as an alternative means to make a step in detailing offers'. Nevertheless, my findings suggest that *enclosing documents* is frequent and important for sales promotion, and thus can be considered as a step. According to Hiranburana, Nuch-Ngorn (1990) points out that in the Thai context incentives (as in *offering incentives*) such as discounts are not likely to induce the Thai customers to buy because they are likely to be more concerned with quality rather than reductions. This may explain why there is no *offering incentives* in my data (although 1 out of 7 TH letters in Hiranburana's study has this step). It is also found in her study that the TH letters make the most frequently use of the expressions of gratitude.

In sum, it seems that there is no definite or universal pattern of moves in sales promotion letters. So far my findings may have led to the above modified pattern of moves. However, to determine the moves of all sales promotion letters, more research needs to be conducted in a larger context to ensure high accuracy and reliability although we should be aware that this type of letter is context-dependent which makes it hard to identify a fixed pattern of moves.

### 3.6 Conclusion

At present, there are very few studies on written business discourse in Thailand. This study is a small cross-cultural study with an aim to shed light on the rhetoric of sales promotion letters. The findings suggest that Bhatia's (1993) pattern of moves does not entirely represent the rhetorical moves and steps in all sales promotion letters. According to my analysis and discussion of the findings, this could result from some

cultural-specific writing patterns. Based on a small-scale corpus, a modified pattern of moves is proposed. Perhaps my data, which has been gathered quite recently, represent new trends of sales promotion writing across cultures. The TH letters, unlike the NT and AMEX letters, do not offer incentives and rarely use pressure tactics. No AMEX letters include polite endings whereas many TH ones do by expressing thanks to the reader and some NT letters end with pleasant, courteous notes (though not expressions of thanks). In appraisal resources concerning Move 2, *Introducing the offer*, in addition to Valuation (the most frequent category), the AMEX correspondence is characterised by Amplification and Composition, the TH correspondence by Amplification and Judgement, while the NT correspondence is characterised by relatively more Valuation, as well as Judgement.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS OF REQUEST**

In written business discourse, letters of request can be regarded as one of the most frequently used types of persuasive correspondence. As a request can be considered as a goal-oriented activity which can enhance the business if it is successful, letters of request invariably play an important role in written business communication both in the local and international or cross-cultural contexts. In this chapter, an investigation into the nature of English letters of request written by Thais and native English speakers will be presented. The aims are to study the rhetorical structure, its main components and their linguistic realisations; and to point out if there are any cultural-specific features or local socio-cultural constraints that distinguish the request writing of Thais from that of native English speakers.

#### **5.1 Working Definitions**

It should be noted that, until recently, research into cross-cultural requests has mainly concerned spoken requests. Studies of business requests have emerged from research on ‘request’ speech acts in the late 1990s, for example, Mulholland’s (1997) work on differences in spoken business requests between Australian and Japanese, Korean and South Vietnamese cultures, and Neumann’s (1997) work on directness in requests in German-Norwegian business discourse. Both studies, especially the latter, are built on the intercultural research on speech acts called ‘the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP)’ initiated by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) which investigates the patterns of requests and apologies in eight different languages. I will not go into details of their project, as it does not involve requests in the business context, which is the main focus here. It is, however, worth noting the concepts of business request in the work of Mulholland (1997) and Neumann (1997). According

to Mulholland (1997:99), the function of a request is to achieve a goal which involves the co-operation of the other person. She regards a request as a fundamental speech act and further explains that, 'In the business world, the goal may be as basic as buying or selling goods, achieving compliance with an instruction or order, seeking information or monetary payment, or making a delicate negotiating move.' (ibid:99) Like Mulholland (1997), Neumann (1997) considers a request as a primary speech act in business talk. She has also established a set of criteria for identifying 'request' in her corpus. In this criteria, she includes 'the entire range of speech acts with the illocutionary force of a request, from a '*wish*' at one end to a '*demand*' at the other' which have the following features:

1. The hearer is asked to do something for the speaker or the speaker's company or to arrange for something to be done in the hearer's company.
2. The utterance signals the intended illocutionary force (requestive) and the type of action required.
3. The listener acknowledges the request by consenting (i.e., complying) or objecting. (ibid:75)

The above criteria can also be applied to written requests by changing the terms 'hearer' to 'reader' and 'speaker' to 'writer'. However, before formulating any working definition for my study, it is useful to consider some definitions from previous research on written business requests. Yli-Jokipii (1994) conducts a cross-cultural study of British, American and Finnish business letters of requests. Based on her corpus of 525 letters, she finds 1,882 requests and analyses them in terms of density, rhetorical arrangement and linguistic properties. She defines a request as 'a stretch of language which pursues a verbal, physical or cognitive response'. (ibid:32) This definition is comprehensive and well-defined, but it seems quite broad and general without any link to the business context. Thus I will also consider another definition which is more business-related.



In their research into requests and status in business correspondence, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996:640) formulate a working definition of request as follows: ‘a legitimate attempt by the writer to get the reader to perform an action required by the business circumstances through evoking the reader’s need for compliance on the grounds of corporate and personal motivators such as necessity, duty and goodwill’. Their definition can be a practically useful starting point for selecting business requests. To the best of my knowledge, there is no definition for the term ‘letter of request’ in any literature on business writing research. Even the above-mentioned studies tend to focus only on the actual request messages in business letters. I need, first of all, to identify the letters of request in my corpus. By adopting the above-mentioned two definitions of written business request for the selection process, it is possible that many types of letters can fit into the selection, such as letters of invitation, letters of sales promotion and any other letters which incorporate requests. The requests found in these letters are business-related and pursue a verbal, physical or cognitive response from the reader; however, they are not ‘primarily’ letters of request.

Then, what is a letter of request? One interesting detailed description is found in the textbook on business letter writing by McComas and Satterwhite (1993). They group letters of inquiries and letters of request together and divide them into four categories:

1. Appointment and reservation requests: ‘A writer sends an *appointment request* to set up a meeting and a *reservation request* to reserve overnight accommodations’. (ibid:153)
2. Buying inquiries: ‘A *buying inquiry* asks for information about products or services the writer is interested in purchasing’. (ibid:154)
3. General requests: ‘In a *general request*, the writer seeks information without any intention to buy or sell’. (ibid:154)
4. Persuasive requests: ‘A request for cooperation, gifts, or favors, without any intention to buy or sell, is a persuasive request. This type of letter attempts to persuade the reader to spend time or money or to go to some trouble to help the writer – usually without benefit to the reader’. (ibid:155)

### 5.1.1 Survey Method

In order to ensure the accuracy in my selection process of the letters of request, I conducted a questionnaire survey asking the respondents to categorise 10 sample letters. Following the above description of letters of request by McComas and Satterwhite (1993) with the consideration of the definitions of request by Yli-Jokipii (1994) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996), I chose 10 business letters from my corpus, which consisted of 3 intended letters of request, 3 other types of letters (i.e. letters of introduction/announcement, sales/sales promotion letters) which incorporate requests, and 4 letters of invitation. These letters were written by both Thais and native speakers of English. In the questionnaire, I did not give any definition of any type of letter. This one-page questionnaire simply asked the respondents to categorise each letter by ticking in one of the 4 boxes, three of which have the 3 categories of letters mentioned earlier as headings, and one of which is labeled 'letter with no request'. (see Appendix F for the questionnaire sample)

The respondents were 20 native English speakers: 9 business professionals (3 female, 6 male), and 11 lecturers of English (5 female, 6 male). Only one of the nine business professionals is an MBA student who has 4-year work experience in the business sector. The rest were analysts, marketing consultants, and bankers who have at least a bachelor's degree in business or statistics (some of them also have an MA, MBA or MSc). Their ages ranged from 22-31 with an average age of 26.8 years old. The eleven lecturers of English work at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education (CELTE) at the University of Warwick. Most of them have long teaching experience, and some of them also teach Business English. Their ages ranged from 34-55 with an average age of 43.3 years old<sup>1</sup>. All respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire at their convenience without any time constraint. At the end of the

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on eight lecturers only since three did not reveal their age in the questionnaire.



questionnaire, they were asked whether they had any problem in classifying the letters. A space was also provided for their comments and suggestions.

### 5.1.2 Questionnaire Results

The results of the 20 questionnaires were surprisingly diverse. Only four respondents gave the answers that matched my intended outcome. Three of them were from the group of business professionals. Five out of nine respondents in this group claimed that they did not have any problem in classifying the letters. Fewer comments were found from this group. They came from those who ticked 'yes' in the problem box, for example, *'In some cases, distinction blurred.'*, *'What is the difference between requesting that someone attends a meeting and an invitation to a meeting?'*, and *'Some letters imply a request, but do not specifically ask for it'*. Generally, the results from this group were less diverse and closer to my intended outcome.

Most respondents from the group of English lecturers gave detailed comments, including those who ticked 'no' in the problem box. The results from this group varied, with a consensus of only one invitation letter (compared to three letters: one request and two invitations, in the other group). A large number of respondents ticked two boxes of classification at the same time in many cases, which reflected how equivocal some letters could be. Two respondents from this group and one respondent from the other group classified three different letters as 'letters of no request'. Invitation letters seemed to have the least classification problem between the two groups. Three out of four were classified as letters of invitation by 19 out of 20 respondents. The diversity was especially found between letters of request and another type of letter which incorporates a request. To illustrate this point, sample comments from the questionnaire are presented below:

- *The letter of introduction can incorporate a request or requests.*
- *Introductory letters are a little confusing in that “request” means to “ask or invite”.*
- *Some letters are performing confirmation/information functions, but the confirmation and information are secondary (and polite) introduction to an explanation of the main business – the request.*
- *No problem with distinction between request and invitation; some problems with distinction between request and another type of letter, since several functions may be involved in the same letter.*
- *Most letters have more than one function.*
- *Most letters have a variety of communicative purposes.*

These questionnaire results and comments led to the question of accuracy in my selection process of the letters of request. It is evident that a letter can be multi-faceted or multi-functional, and that the term ‘letter of request’ is not precisely understood. The perception of ‘letter of request’ can be different depending on the how a person views or identifies it according to their knowledge and understanding. Since there are some general agreements and disagreements, it was necessary to set up a set of criteria in order to efficiently proceed with the letter selection for my analysis.

### **5.1.3 Criteria for Working Definition of the Letter of Request**

The following set of criteria was devised to facilitate and systemise the selection process of the letters of request in my corpus. It was developed from the definitions of request by Yli-Jokipii (1994) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) and the description of the letter of inquiry and request by McComas and Satterwhite (1993).

A letter of request contains at least one message which pursues a verbal, physical or cognitive response under the following conditions:

- 1) The request(s) is made under the business circumstances through evoking the reader’s need for compliance on the ground of corporate and/or personal motivators such as necessity, duty and goodwill.



- 2) The main purpose of the letter is to request the reader and/or the reader's company to perform an action (verbal, physical or cognitive) for the writer and/or the writer's company.
- 3) When a letter has a variety of communicative purposes, it is categorised as 'a letter of request' if only its main purpose is to request. It is categorised as 'another type of letter with request message(s)' if its main purpose is something else.
- 4) The reader and/or reader's company has an option of refusal.
- 5) The request(s) can be general requests (e.g. asking for information or cooperation), service-oriented requests (e.g. asking about a product or service the writer is interested to purchase), reservation requests (e.g. asking for a hotel reservation for a business trip).
- 6) The request(s) must not involve any invitation purpose. Appointment requests (i.e. asking for the availability of a person in order to set up a business meeting) can be an exception because their main purpose is to request. However, the letter asking for the reader's physical appearance in an organised seminar, conference, party or social function is categorised as 'a letter of invitation' because its main purpose is to invite.
- 7) The request(s) must not involve any direct selling purposes. The letter asking the reader to buy the writer's product or service is categorised as 'a letter of sales promotion'.

The purpose of the above-mentioned criteria is to provide a framework in order to group together the letters that have similar characteristics and to specify them as 'letters of request' for further analysis. The data classification and quantitative analysis are presented in the next section.

## 5.2 Data Classification

Based on the above-mentioned criteria, 80 correspondence texts are selected for this study and are classified as 'letters of request'. They consist of 42 letters, 20 faxes and 18 emails, all written by Thais and native speakers of English. The following table

demonstrates the proportion of the letters written by Thais (TH) to those written by native speakers of English (NT):

**Table 5.1: Corpus of the letters of request**

Description	NT	TH	Total number of letters
<i>Letters</i>	21	21	42
<i>Faxes</i>	7	13	20
<i>Emails</i>	14	4	18
<b>Total proportion</b>	42	38	<b>80</b>

The native English speakers are either from the United Kingdom or the United States of America. They or their companies have some business contacts with Thailand. There are 42 NT letters and 38 TH letters, which forms quite a good proportion for the analysis. The sources of the letters vary from small local Thai companies to multinational corporations as well as the public sector. A summary of twelve large groups of businesses represented in this corpus is presented in alphabetical order below:

- Auto Industry
- Business Research Institute
- Charity
- Consumer Products
- Finance
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Import/Export Business (e.g. clothing, cosmetics, canned food)
- Machinery, Engineering and Manufacturing
- Public/Government Sector (e.g. embassy, museum, city council)
- Publishing
- Telecommunications
- University/Higher education

**5.2.1 Bases for Requests**

In each letter, the writer generally aims to solicit information, to set up some business arrangements, or to get some feedback to maintain or establish a good business relationship with the reader who is his/her business counterpart. The main bases for request can be outlined as follows:



1. Ask for an action (e.g. help, service, approval)
2. Ask for information
3. Ask for an action and information
4. Ask for an appointment

The bases are the objectives of request in my corpus. From the main four bases, there are 7 purposes found in 80 letters of request:

	<i>Total number of letters</i>
1. requesting help or cooperation	(23)
2. soliciting information	(34)
3. requesting donation (e.g. fund-raising)	(3)
4. inquiring about a product or service	(9)
5. requesting an appointment	(5)
6. requesting an approval or permission	(3)
7. requesting a change (e.g. change of goods/service, requesting a fee reduction)	(3)

These bases for request and purposes are presented here as background information. I will not discuss the detailed content of those 80 letters because of the vastness of the data. Note that some extracts and full examples will be given later in the analytic sections.

### 5.2.2 Distributions and Positions of Requests

In order to examine the distributions and positions of requests, it is essential to consider what counts as a request in this study. A request can be regarded as an expression of a demand or need. The writer wants the reader to respond by doing something for him/her. In their request analysis, Bargiela-Chappini and Harris (1996:647) briefly introduce the terms ‘pre-request’ and ‘post-request’, which are separate from requests, in their model called structural representation of written requests. (see Chapter 2, p.50) In this model, the pre-request consists of alerter and request supportive move whereas the post-request consists of emphasis, expansion

and thanks. Although there is no further clarification in their research, it is obvious that pre-requests and post-requests are different from main or core requests. The following example from my corpus can help illustrate this point:

**Sample 5.1: Letter of request (TH45)**

The Bank of Thailand  
London Representative Office  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, British Tower  
2 Sky Court, LONDON EC3R 8HJ

Mr G. Schrimpf  
Capital Market & Stock Market Division (K2)  
Deutsche Bundesbank  
Frankfurt

1<sup>st</sup> December 1998

Dear Mr Schrimpf,

Further to our telephone conversation, I would like to request your kind assistance regarding how the German Government developed the bond market.(1) Currently, the Bank of Thailand, in cooperation with the government of the Kingdom of Thailand, is trying to develop the domestic bond market in Thailand. We are considering how to set up a benchmark yield curve and would like to learn from the experience of the countries where the bond markets have been developed. Having the construction of the benchmark yield curve in mind, we would like to learn the following points: (2)

- 1) ...
- 2) ...
- 3) ...
- 4) ...
- 5) ...

Should you have any article or literature regarding the government bond yield curve, we would be most grateful if you could fax us at the Fax No. 44 0207 909 2509. (3)

Please accept our gratitude for your kind assistance. (4)

Yours sincerely  
*Signature*  
Wannaree Sriudom  
Chief Representative

The underlined sentences (1) to (4) represent the pre-request, requests, and post-request. It is apparent that (1) is a pre-request, which acts as an alerter informing the reader of the purpose of the letter. (2) and (3) are the actual requests because they specify what the writer requires from the reader. Then, (4) is a post-request, which contains an expression of gratitude. Thus in this example, there are two requests in Paragraph 1 and 2. The concept of pre-request and post-request will be extensively discussed in terms of function and linguistic realisation later in this chapter. This is



an introduction to illustrate how requests are sorted out for the investigation of their distributions and positions in the letters.

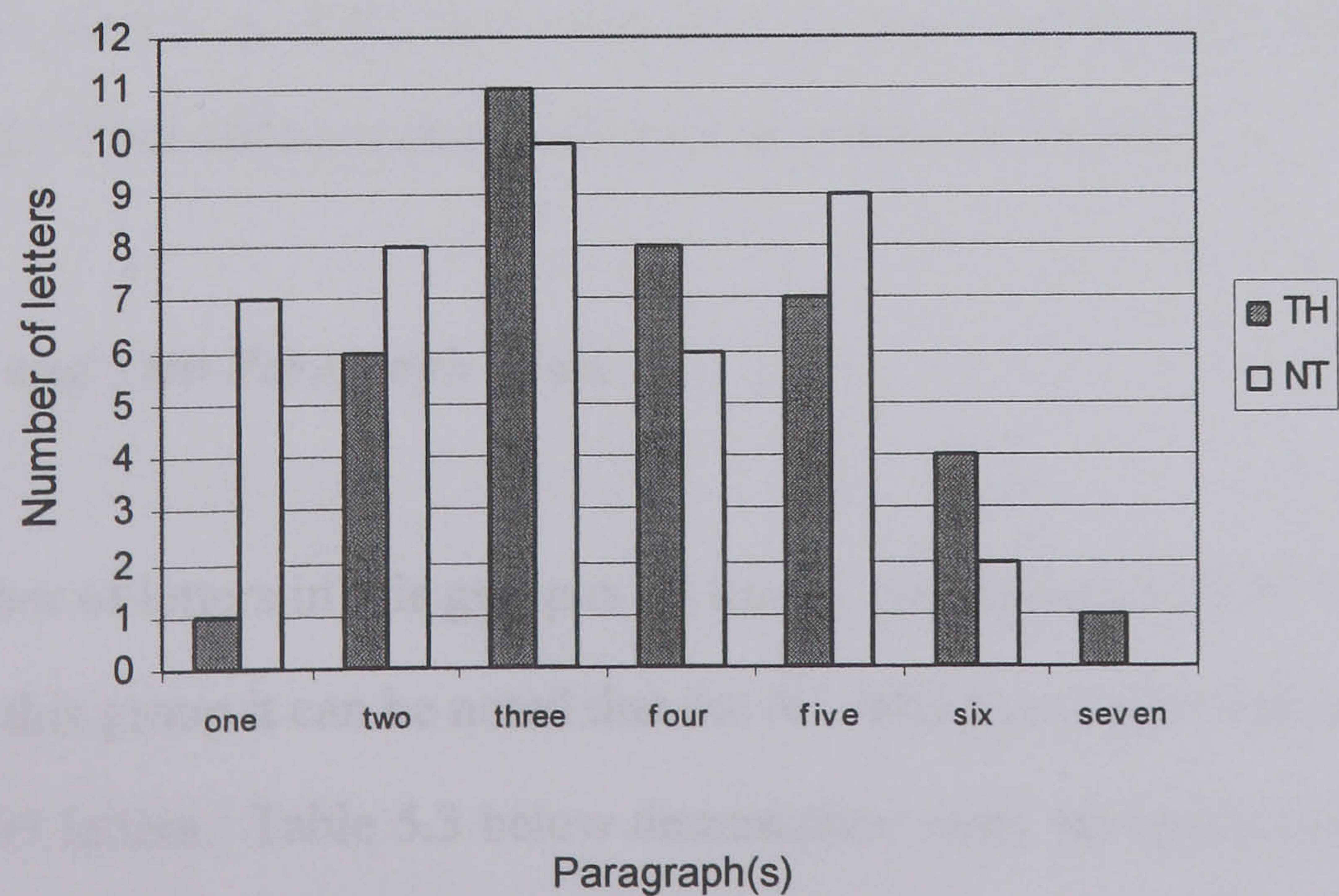
Let us now focus on the length in text. The length of the 80 letters of request is measured here according to their ‘paragraph(s)’. The variation is from 1 to 7 paragraphs:

**Table 5.2: Lengths of the letters of request**

Number of paragraph(s)	Number of letter(s) <i>Total = 80</i>
1 paragraph	8
2 paragraphs	14
3 paragraphs	21
4 paragraphs	14
5 paragraphs	16
6 paragraphs	6
7 paragraphs	1

The letters with three paragraphs are most frequently found (21 out of 80 letters). There are only six letters with six paragraphs, and only one letter with seven paragraphs. The proportion of the TH to the NT letters is presented in the following graph:

**Figure 5.1: Number of Paragraph(s) in the TH and NT letters of request**





The statistics reveal some interesting differences between the TH and NT letters in terms of their length in paragraphs. The number of the NT letters with one paragraph is much higher than that of the TH letters (7 NT vs. 1 TH). The NT letters with two paragraphs are also more frequently found than the TH letters in this corpus. On the other hand, the TH letters with six paragraphs are more than the NT letters. In addition, only one TH letter is found with seven paragraphs. It seems that the NT letters tend to use fewer paragraphs than the TH letters. The average length of the NT letters is 3.2 paragraphs whereas that of the TH letters is 3.8 paragraphs.

While counting the number of paragraphs, I noticed that many long letters, especially TH ones, have long introductions and relegate the main requests towards the middle or the end of the letters. This supports what Hinds (1990) calls a ‘delayed introduction of purpose’ or ‘quasi-inductive style of writing’. Therefore, it is worth examining the positions of requests in my corpus. In order to do it in an effective and accurate way, it is useful to divide the letters into two groups: 1) single and two-paragraph texts 2) multi-paragraph texts. The reason why I group together two-paragraph letters with single paragraph letters is because, in my corpus, they more or less share the same characteristics. The two-paragraph letters often have requests in one paragraph, no matter whether it is the first or second paragraph. The only difference is that they tend to have post-requests in the second paragraph. The multi-paragraph texts consist of the letters with three or more paragraphs, which, due to their length, may have different distributions or positions of requests.

#### ***5.2.2.1 Single and Two-Paragraph Texts***

The total number of letters in this group is 22 letters, consisting of 15 NT letters and 7 TH letters. In this group it can be noted that the NT letters are approximately twice as many as the TH letters. Table 5.3 below demonstrate some interesting figures of all letters in this group:



**Table 5.3: Positions of requests in single and two-paragraph texts**

Type	Total No. of letters	No. of letters with request(s) in one paragraph	No. of letters with request(s) in two paragraphs	No. of letters in which request(s) start in Paragraph #1	No. of letters in which request(s) start in Paragraph #2	No. of letters with pre-request	No. of letters with post-request
TH	7	7	0	6	1	1	7
NT	15	14	1	13	2	0	6

Almost all single and two-paragraph letters have the requests in one paragraph. Only one NT letter has the requests in two paragraphs. It is interesting to see that the requests in most TH and NT letters start in the first paragraph. There is only 1 out of 7 TH letters, and 2 out of 15 NT letters which start the requests in the second paragraph. Another interesting point is the distribution of pre-request. Of all 22 letters in this group, only one TH letter has a pre-request. As they all are short letters, the writer seems to go straight to the request(s) without any alerter or request supportive move. However, the post-request seems to be much more popular. All TH letters in this group have post-requests. But only 6 out of 15, or 40% of the NT corpus (3 letters, 1 fax and 2 emails) have post-requests. So far we have looked at the number of requests in paragraph(s). We shall also examine the frequency of requests through the number of request sentences in this group:

**Table 5.4: Number of request sentences in single and two-paragraph texts**

Type	No. of letters with single paragraph text	No. of letters with two-paragraph texts	No. of letters with one request sentence	No. of letters with two request sentences	No. of letters with three request sentences
TH N=7	1	6	6	1	0
NT N=15	7	8	11	3	1

*N = Total number*

The number of request sentences in the single and two-paragraph texts ranges from one to three sentences. Most TH letters have two paragraphs, and one request sentence. There is only one TH letter which has two request sentences. More variety is found in the NT letters. They have quite an equal number of single and two-paragraph letters (7 and 8 respectively). Although the majority of the NT letters contain one request sentence, three of them have two request sentences, and one of

them has three request sentences. One reason why we examine the number of request sentences is to see whether it is related to the number of topic(s) of request. It is interesting that, in this group of single and two-paragraph texts, the number of request sentences varies according to the topic(s) of request. In each TH and NT letter, if there is one topic of request, only one request sentence is found. There is no repetition of request, except for some post-requests which express anticipation or thanks. Relatively, when there are two topics, there are always two request sentences. The only NT letter with three request sentences also has three topics of request.

In conclusion, the requests in single and two-paragraph texts come early in the first paragraph with an infrequent use of pre-request. Post-requests are found more in the TH letters than in the NT letters. As for the frequency of requests, it is evident that the number of request topics seems to determine the number of the request sentences in both TH and NT letters in this group. Next, we will examine similar issues in the multi-paragraph texts.

#### ***5.2.2.2 Multi-Paragraph Texts***

58 letters (31 TH and 27 NT) are multi-paragraph, with three or more paragraphs. The distribution of requests ranges from one to three paragraphs. In order to systematically identify the positions of requests in the multi-paragraph texts, it is practical to divide them into 3 categories: (1) initial paragraph, (2) medial paragraph, and (3) penultimate paragraph. Initial paragraph means that the requests start at the first paragraph. Medial paragraph refers to requests which start at either the second or third paragraphs of the letters. Requests in penultimate paragraph start at either the fourth or fifth paragraphs and may or may not end in the sixth paragraph. In this corpus, no request is found in the seventh paragraph. The statistical data from this group of letters is displayed in the following tables:



Table 5.5: Distribution of requests in multi-paragraph texts

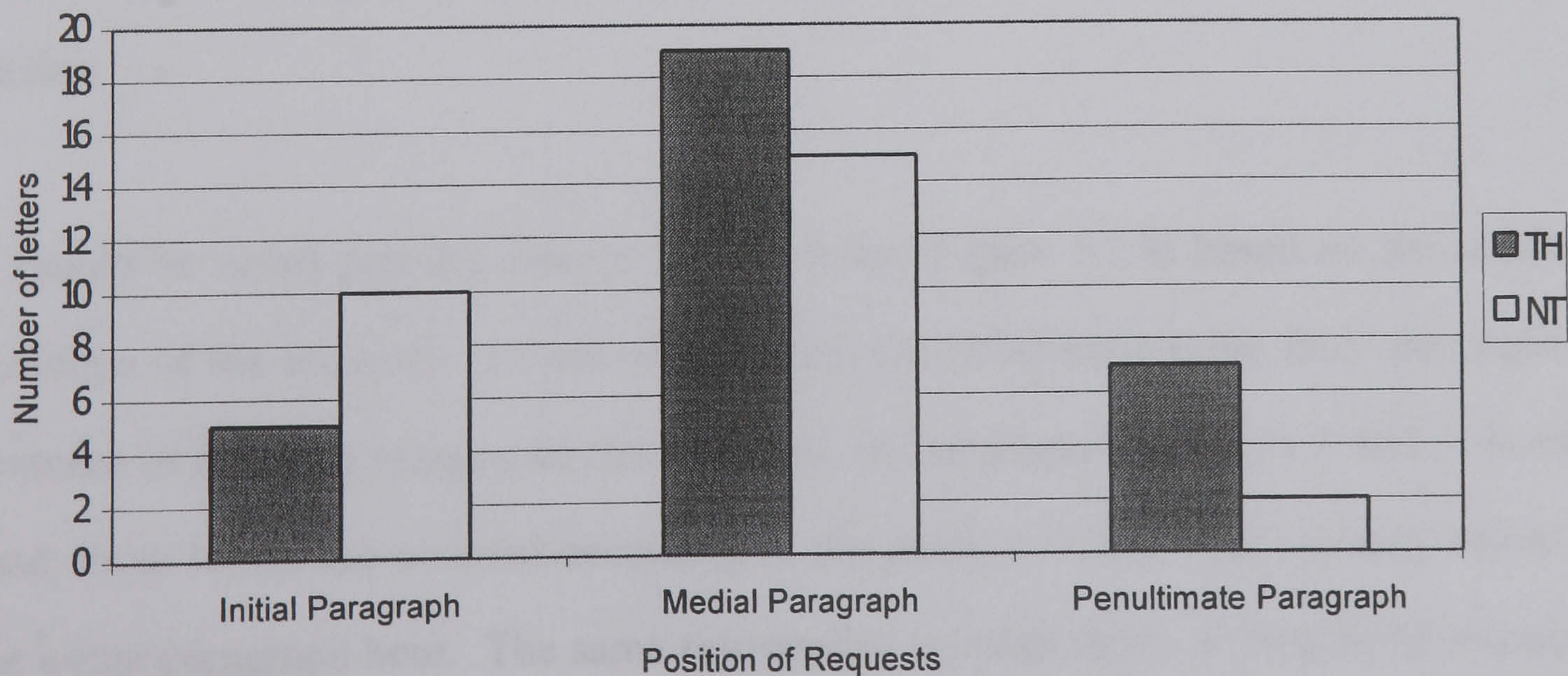
Type	Total No. of letters	No. of letters with request(s) in one paragraph	No. of letters with request(s) in two paragraphs	No. of letters with request(s) in three paragraphs
TH	31	19	11	1
NT	27	17	10	0

Table 5.6: Positions of request in multi-paragraph texts

Type	No. of letters in which request(s) start at the Initial Paragraph	No. of letters in which request(s) start at a Medial Paragraph	No. of letters in which request(s) start at a Penultimate Paragraph	No. of letters with pre-request	No. of letters with post-request
TH N = 31	5	19	7	10	30
NT N = 27	10	15	2	3	25

Most multi-paragraph letters tend to have the requests within one paragraph. Only 11 TH letters and 10 NT letters out of the total of 58 letters have the requests in two paragraphs, and only one TH letter has its requests in three paragraphs. The positions of requests here are more diverse than those in the previous group. As the letters in this group have multi-paragraph texts, the requests tend to occur more often, and sometimes in different paragraphs. Figure 5.2 illustrates the differences between the TH and NT letters:

Figure 5.2: Positions of requests





Of all 15 letters with requests in the initial paragraph, 10 are the NT letters, which are twice as many as the TH letters. Like single and two-paragraph group in which 13 out of 15 NT letters start the requests in the first paragraph, the results in this group also suggest that the NT writers tend to begin their requests early in the letters. The TH writers seem to start their requests in the medial and penultimate paragraphs. In multi-paragraph texts, the medial paragraph is the most popular position of requests. Up to 7 TH letters have the requests in the penultimate paragraph in comparison to just 2 NT letters. This really supports the concept of a ‘delayed introduction of purpose’ or ‘quasi-inductive style of writing’ initiated by Hinds (1990). In his study of expository texts written in four languages including Thai, which were translated into English for analysis, Hinds (1990) claims that Thai along with Japanese, Korean and Chinese style of writing introduce the topic or thesis statement later in the passages instead of at the beginning of the essays. In the case of request letters, the TH letters seem to have a ‘delayed introduction of purpose’ because they tend to have their requests in the medial and penultimate paragraphs rather than in the initial paragraph. This has also been pointed out by a lecturer of English who was a participant in my survey questionnaire. She wrote in the comment section ‘*It seems to me that requests come later in Southeast Asian letters – British/American reader may mistake purpose because request is not incorporate in the opening paragraph*’. We will examine what precedes requests, which delays the main purpose, in the next section.

It should be noted that the data in Table 5.6 and Figure 5.2 is based on the starting positions of the requests. 21 out of 58 letters (36.20%) have more than one request sentence in different paragraphs, for example, in Paragraph 1 and 2 or 1 and 3; in this case, these letters are counted according to the position of the first request, which is the initial paragraph here. The same rule applies to other letters in which the requests appear in Paragraph 2 & 3, 2 & 4, 3 & 4 (the medial paragraph), and Paragraph 4 & 6, 5 & 6 (the penultimate paragraph). Table 5.6 also shows that pre-requests are more



frequent when compared to the previous group. They are found in 22.40% of the letters in this group: 10 TH letters and 3 NT letters. It is noticeable that, like the previous group, pre-requests are more predominant in the TH letters than in the NT letters. Post-requests are found in all except 3 letters, which accounts for 94.82%. The number of post-requests in the letters ranges from one to four sentences. One post-request sentence is most frequently found, especially in the NT letters. Two, three and four post-request sentences are used extensively in the TH letters. Only 2 NT letters have two post-request sentences, and none has three or four post-requests. It can be assumed that the TH letters use more pre-requests and more multiple post-request sentences than the NT letters. This will be explored in detail later.

Now we will move on to consider the number of request sentences in relation to the number of the request topic(s). The statistical data is presented in the tables below:

**Table 5.7: Number of request sentences**

Type	No. of letters with one request sentence	No. of letters with two request sentences	No. of letters with three request sentences	No. of letters with four request sentences
TH N = 31	15	12	4	0
NT N = 27	10	12	4	1

*N = Total Number*

**Table 5.8: Number of topics of request**

Type	No. of letters with one topic of request	No. of letters with two topics of request	No. of letters with three topics of request
TH N = 31	26	5	0
NT N = 27	18	7	2

*N = Total Number*

It is interesting that although the letters have multi-paragraph texts ranging from three to seven paragraphs, most of them (44 out of 58) have only one topic of request. 26 out of 31, or 84% of the TH letters have one topic, and the rest five, or 16%, have two topics of request. On the other hand, 18 NT letters, which account for 67%, have one request topics. There are 7 NT letters with two topics, and 2 NT letters with three topics, which account for 26% and 7% respectively. As the request sentences range

from one to four sentences, it is appealing to see whether the number of topic(s) influences the frequency of request sentences or not. We will examine this in the following table:

**Table 5.9: Proportion of request sentences to their topics**

Number of request sentence(s)	TH N = 31	NT N = 27	Number of letters with one topic of request	Number of letters with two topics of request	Number of letters with three topics of request
One request sentence	15	10	25	0	0
Two request sentences	12	12	16	8	0
Three request sentences	4	4	3	4	1
Four request sentences	0	1	0	0	1

The majority of the letters in this group have either one or two topics of request. All letters with one request sentence have one topic of request. Those with two and three request sentences either have one or two topics, although one topic is more frequently found. There are altogether 2 letters with three topics of request, one contains three request sentences, and the other has four request sentences. Both of them are NT letters. In this group, the number of request sentences is less dependent on the number of the request topics. For example, 16 out of 58 letters with two request sentences have just one topic, and 7 out of 8 letters with three request sentences have one or two topics. The NT letters seem to have more topics of request than the TH letters in general.

In conclusion, requests in this group mainly consist of one and two request sentences represented in one or two paragraphs. The TH letters seem to delay the requests until the medial or penultimate paragraphs whereas many NT letters tend to begin the requests early in the initial paragraph. Pre-requests are predominantly found in the TH letters although they account for only 22.40% of the whole group. Post-requests have a higher percentage of 91.40%, and can be up to three and four sentences in the TH letters. One topic of request is mostly found in the letters with one, two or even three request sentences. The case of two or three request sentences with one topic is



mostly found in the TH letters, which reveals some repetition in TH request writing. It is found that the number of request sentences is related to the number of the request topics in a lesser extent than the previous group. Multiple topics of request are found in the NT letters rather than the TH letters although the TH letters are generally longer in terms of paragraphs. The next section is the qualitative analysis, which will closely explore the rhetorical patterns, textual features and linguistic realisation of the letters of request.

### 5.3 Structure of the Letter of Request

Reasons for writing a business letter of request vary according to the business circumstances. However, most of the reasons seem to emerge from a need or demand of the writer or the writer’s company. The main purpose is to get a response from the reader to establish or maintain a good business relationship. Although there is research into written business requests (see especially Yli-Jokipii 1994, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996), it does not really identify the rhetorical patterns of moves and steps in the letters of request.

Only in Hiranburana’s (1996) unpublished PhD thesis is there a section concerning the rhetorical pattern of the enquiry letter. According to her study, an enquiry is ‘a request made up of a question or a set of questions to obtain some information about products and services such as prices and other terms’. (ibid:183) She claims that the enquiry letters written in English by Thais, native English speakers, and Non-Thai-non-native-English speakers share certain conventions represented through the similarities in the pattern of moves and steps. She then introduces the move structure of the enquiry letter as follows:

- Opening salutation
  - Move 1 Establishing a Link
    - Step 1.1 Acknowledging source of contact information and/or

- Step 1.2 Acknowledging informative materials and/or
- Step 1.3 Referring to previous contact
- Move 2 Establishing Confidence
  - Step 1 Emphasising company's credentials and/or
  - Step 2 Making good impressions
- Move 3 Soliciting Information
  - Step 1 Expressing interest in product(s)/service(s) and/or
  - Step 2A Requesting/Specifying product/service details and/or
  - Step 2B Requesting/Specifying transaction details
- Move 4 Prompting/Encouraging Further Contact
  - Step 1 Expressing expectation of reply/attention
- Closing salutation

(ibid:185)

Her definition of the enquiry letter is just part of the definition of the letter of request according to my criteria. As the letters of request in my corpus have more variety of 'request' purposes, her rhetorical pattern of moves and steps is not practical in this context. In addition to soliciting information about a product or service, requests in my corpus involve more complex situations such as asking for help or cooperation, requesting an appointment or approval, and appealing for donation. They include both old and new business relationships, which are not always easy to identify. It seems that, unlike sales promotion letters, there is no specific or detailed move analysis of letters of request because they are extremely context-dependent and vary according to the types of request(s) required. Perhaps this is why Yli-Jokipii (1994) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) have chosen some other general ways of identifying the structure of the letters of request.

Following the AIDA principle of persuasive discourse<sup>2</sup> presented by Limaye (1983:17) in his analysis of syntax of two late sixteenth century letters of request, Yli-Jokipii (1994:125) develops the rhetorical arrangement as follows: opening, attention, interest, action, closing and staging. This seems to be too general, so I decided to

---

<sup>2</sup> The writer's task is to capture the reader's *attention (A)*, arouse *interest (I)*, create *desire (D)* for what he is offering, and invite and effect *action (A)*.



adopt Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris' (1996) model called a structural representation of written requests, which consists of compulsory (C) and optional (O) components. (see Chapter 2, p.50)

Their model is slightly modified here so that it can best represent my data. The new pattern is as follows:

Salutation	(C)
Introduction, background information, reference (to create attention and/or interest)	(O)
Pre-Request	(O)
Request	(C)
Post-Request	(O)
Complimentary close and signature	(C)

Note that the term 'salutation' is used instead of Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris' (1996) term 'address'. It includes the opening salutation such as Dear sir/madam, and Dear + First or Last Name of the addressee. The body of the letter includes the 'introduction, background information and reference', 'pre-request', 'request' and 'post-request'. The final components are complimentary close and signature, which are common to all business letters. First, I will illustrate this structural pattern in one sample of routine and relational correspondence respectively. The concept of routine and relational correspondence is drawn from Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996:642) who point out the difference between both types as follows:

**Routine correspondence** relates to business activities which are likely to be both repetitive and conventional, in which both addresser and addressee have clear expectations and a considerable amount of shared knowledge. **Relational correspondence** includes longer and more complex texts. These texts sometimes contain more than one request and usually relate to matters that the Managing Director (*Note: this managing director is the subject in their study*) must deal with in his capacity as head of the company.

Routine correspondence is, for example, letters of request asking for an annual report of the company, requesting donation, inquiring about a product or service and requesting about day-to-day issues in business operations in general. Relational

correspondence is found much less frequently. It includes letters which contain specific requests or ask for uncommon type of help or cooperation addressed to a particular person (not necessarily the managing director), for example, letters asking for a specific change or negotiating a fee reduction.

**Sample 5.2: Routine letter of request (NT07)**

CS First Boston (Hong Kong) Limited

Alphatec Electronics Public Company  
17/2 Moo 18, Suwintawong Road,  
Amphur Bang-num-priow, THAILAND

December 4, 1995

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please note that I am interested in obtaining information concerning your organisation, could you please send me two copies of your last annual report and third quarter earnings. If possible please add me to your distribution list for future publications. I have attached a mailing address label for your convenience.

I thank you in advance for your assistance. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to call me on (852) 2847 0436.

Regards,

Anthony Michael Tuffey  
Vice President  
Head of Syndicate, Asia

**Salutation**

**Pre-request  
Request #1**

**Request #2**

**Post-request**

**Complimentary close**

**Signature**



Sample 5.1: Relational letter of request (TH31)

National Institute of Development Administration  
Bangkapi, Bangkok, Thailand

4 March 1991  
Mr Yuen Ngok Onn  
Seminar Organizing Committee  
Regional Language Center  
30 Orange Grove Road  
Singapore 1025

Dear sir,  
Thank you very much for your letter dated 22 February 1991 informing me about the confirmation of registration/accommodation of my participation in the Regional Seminar at RELC from 22-26 April 1991.

I am writing this letter to inform you and request you to make some changes about my status and my accommodation here. You have addressed me as “Ms Vathit Waiprib” and put me in the same room with Ms Salida Seninard. The fact is I am MR VATHIT WAIPRIB (MALE). I did underline the word Male in the application form. So please change my name to MR VATHIT WAIPRIB. And for this reason, it is impossible for Ms Salida Seninard to share the room with me at the Novotel Orchid Inn. So would you please make some arrangement so that I can share the room with any male participant (preferably [sic.]Thai) and Ms Salida Seninard can share the room with any Thai participant.

I would very much appreciate it if you would let me know about my request, especially about Ms Salida’s and my accommodation, before our travel to Singapore.

Your sincerely,  
  
Vathit Waiprib (Mr)  
Assistant Professor

Salutation

Reference

Pre-request

Request #1

Request #2

Post-request

Complimentary close

Signature

The samples above show the differences between routine and relational letters of request. It is noticeable that the routine letter, which is written by a native speaker, is

much shorter, and its requests appear in the initial paragraph after a pre-request (in the same sentence as Request#1). The topic of the requests is conventional. The writer wants to receive an annual report and to be on the distribution list of the reader's company. In this type of requests, the writer and the reader have clear expectations and shared knowledge, so it does not need a long explanation. On the other hand, the relational letter written by a Thai person is longer and more complex. It has one introductory paragraph which is the reference to the issue to be raised. There is also a pre-request in the second paragraph, which acts as an alerter before moving on to the main two requests. The post-request in the final paragraph represents an emphasis to the stated requests.

Both samples also show how diverse letters of request can be. That is why it is difficult to specify a particular rhetorical pattern of moves and steps in which detailed functions need to be identified (e.g. Move 1 Introducing the context – Step 1 Referring to previous contact/Step 2 Giving background information, Move 2 Requesting – different steps depending on the types of requests, etc.). This does not mean that it is impossible to conduct a move analysis, but due to the diverse nature of my corpus, I chose to focus on the main components of the letters of request; namely, pre-request, request, and post-request. I will start with the essence of the letters; that is, the actual or core requests, followed by pre-requests and post-requests. The following sections aim to examine the textual features and linguistic realisations of those three components and to compare the TH and NT request writing.

## **5.4 Discussion of Textual Features and Linguistic Realisation of Requests**

There are 129 request sentences in the corpus, 59 of which are found in the TH letters (46%), and 70 of which are found in the NT letters (54%). From my data, the fundamental textual feature that contributes to linguistic realisation of requests is the



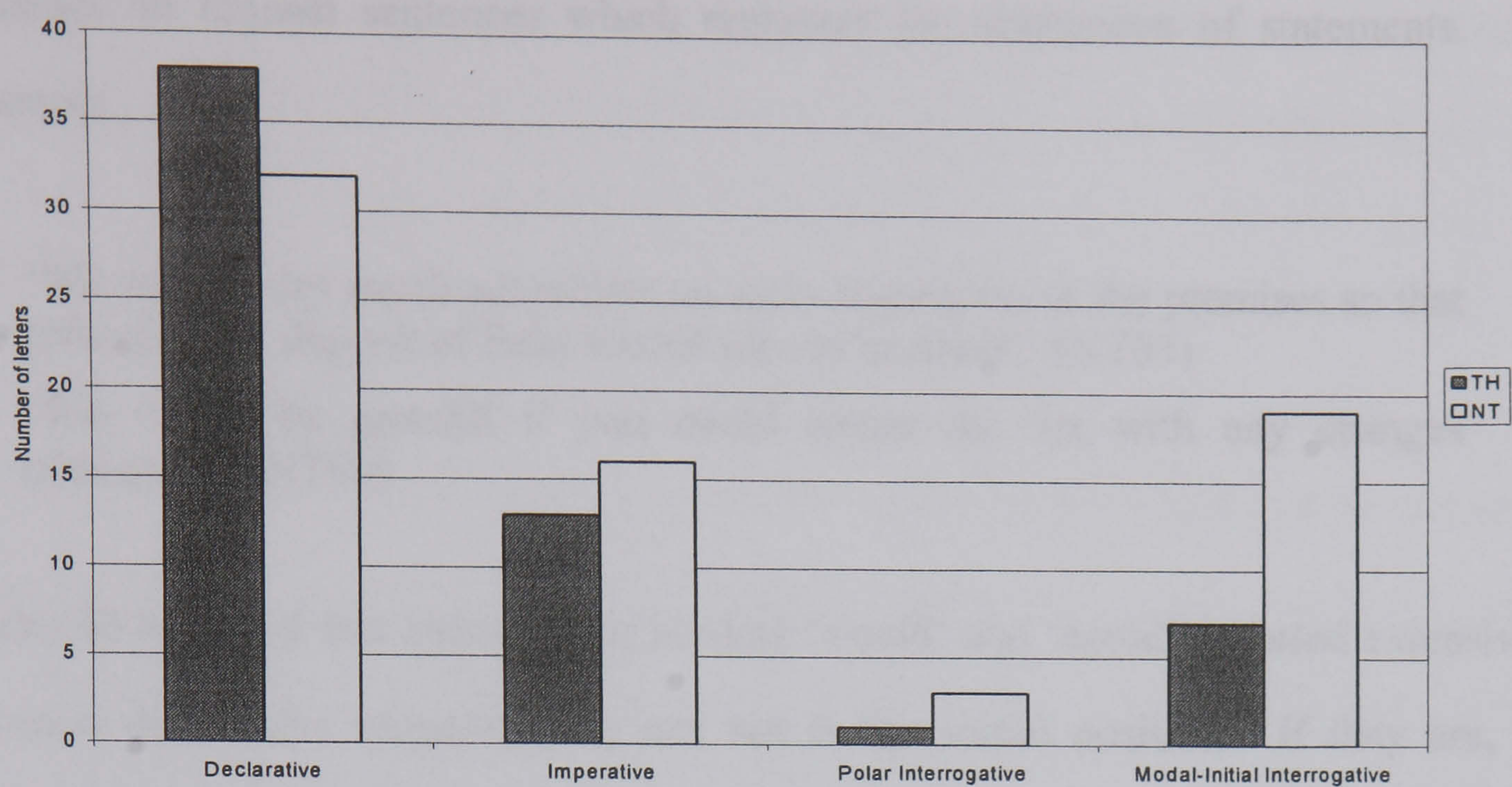
mood type of the request sentences. I adopted the concept of ‘mood’ from Halliday (1994:43) who states, ‘An independent major clause is either indicative or imperative in mood; if indicative, it is either declarative or interrogative; if interrogative, it is either polar interrogative (‘yes/no’ type) or content interrogative (‘WH’ type)’. In his study, Halliday introduced 3 basic mood types consisting of *declarative*, *interrogative* and *imperative*. Interrogative mood is divided into yes-no and WH-interrogatives. Following Halliday (1994), Eggins and Slade (1997:74) summarise that mood refers to patterns of clause type, and they expand Halliday’s 3 basic mood types to include ‘exclamation’ mood for their study of casual conversation analysis. In written request analysis, Yli-Jokipii (1994) introduced the structural property of requests consisting of declarative, interrogative, imperative and modal-initial. Modal-initial is, according to Yli-Jokipii (1994:163), the type of request that starts with a modal verb. It is often found in the form of the yes-no question without a question mark, and its function is not to solicit a ‘yes-no’ type of response, but to request the reader to do something. For example,

‘Would you please send us the information on TELIA’s international training programmes on Telecommunications and relevant subjects in 1996 (July – October 1996).’ (TH20)

In my corpus, there are no content interrogatives (WH-questions). Only polar interrogatives (yes-no questions) are found. Although ‘modal-initial’ is in the form of the interrogative mood, it is different from polar interrogatives in terms of its function. Thus, in this analysis I will separate it from the polar interrogative type. The following figure summarises the proportion of declarative, imperative, polar interrogative and modal-initial interrogative found in both TH and NT letters.



Figure 5.3: Mood types of the requests



The results reveal that the mood type most frequently used in TH and NT requests is declarative. This is consistent with Yli-Jokipii’s (1994) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris’ (1996) findings, which report that the majority of requests in their data is declarative. In their research into requests and status in business correspondence, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) also explore the mood, or as they call it the ‘modes of realisation of requests’, following Yli-Jokipii’s (1994) request formats (imperative, interrogative, declarative, modal-initial). Their results confirm Yli-Jokipii’s (1994) findings that the declarative mood is the most frequently used in requests.

From the figure above, we can see that the TH requests use more declarative types than the NT requests. On the other hand, imperative, polar interrogative and modal-initial interrogative are found more often in the NT requests. The linguistic realisation of requests in terms of the mood types is presented below.

5.4.1 Declarative

Halliday (1994:74) states, ‘The grammatical category that is characteristically used to exchange information is the indicative; within the category of indicative, the



characteristic expression of a statement is the declarative'. Declarative mood here includes all request sentences which represent the expression of statements. For example,

'We would very much appreciate an early inspection of the premises so that refund of the deposit of Baht 40,000.00 can be made.' (NT03)

'We would be grateful if you could return the fax with any changes necessary.' (NT09)

It should be noted that although the modals 'would' and 'could' are used extensively in most declarative requests, they are not in the initial position. If they are, the clauses will be categorised as the modal-initial mood type. According to my data, the requests in declarative mood can be realised through three different types of declarative clauses. These three subcategories are 1) 'need' statement, 2) 'wish' statement, and 3) 'self-obligation' statement.

### *1. 'Need' Statement*

This is perhaps the most direct style of request. The writer expresses the request through his/her perspective or point of view by using the verb 'need'. Only five examples are found in the overall 129 requests:

'We also **need** a helping hand from your company in whatever way you can assist us especially by:

1. participating in this event
2. taking part in the exhibition, and
3. making a kind donation of whatever magnitude you feel is appropriate.(TH06)

'As part of our web site's database, we **need** your valuable hotel's information and slides.' (TH30)

'I **need** information on official Thai policy and priorities in the area of conservation and biodiversity and how they apply to marine ecosystems.' (NT40)

I also urgently **need** a list of possible places in Thailand that can provide 'regulation size' swimming pools for training. (NT59)

From the above examples, it seems that the TH writers soften the tone of ‘need’ by using the terms ‘helping hand’, ‘in whatever way you can assist us’ (TH06), and ‘your *valuable* hotel’s information and slides’ (TH30), whereas the NT writers state their need more clearly and directly.

### 1. ‘Wish’ Statement

This subcategory does not explicitly express the need or necessity of the writer. It rather represents his/her ‘wish’ as a request to the reader. Again, the writer makes a request through his/her perspective. Like the first category, the we- and I-orientation is used here as well. The writer may choose the verbs ‘ask’, ‘request’ or ‘inquire’, and may use the term ‘would like to’ to express his/her wish. For example,

‘I **ask** you to join me in making a gift to this year’s Annual Fund.’ (NT05)

‘We also **request** to be included in your company’s mailing list in order to receive future reports and to be regularly and promptly informed of relevant company financial news.’ (NT11)

‘We would like to get two copies of the English annual reports of your company for 1992, 1993 and 1994.’ (NT08)

‘Thus, we would like to learn and observe your 5S Activities at your company on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1999 at 1.00 p.m.’ (TH44)

‘Consequently, we would like you to advocate our new business line by sending or faxing us the importer list in your country....’ (TH53)

‘Following our conversation this morning, I am contacting you to ask if you have any video footage available for our programme called Cathay Pacific “World of Events”.’ (NT62)

‘Therefore I would like to enquiry (sic) about the figure (sic) of how many airports in Thailand in the year of 1979.’ (TH64)

From my corpus, the NT writers seem to use the verbs ‘ask’ or ‘request’ more than the TH writers who tend to use the term ‘would like to’ in order to express their wishes. There are 12 requests using the term ‘would like to’, 10 of which are written by the TH writers, and the remaining two are written by the NT writers.



## 2. *'Self-obligation' Statement*

I adopt this category from Yli-Jokipii (1994:179) who refers to Brown and Levinson's (1987:210) concept of redressing the Face Threatening Act (FTA) by explicitly expressing the writer/speaker's indebtedness to the hearer. 'Utterances which express such tactics, encompassing high cost to the writer on the cost-benefit scale, will be referred to as 'self-obligation statements'. They are realized by a lexical item or a set of items indicating the writer's gratitude, or an obligation to show gratitude, for a future act by the reader'. (Yli-Jokipii 1994:179) The examples from my corpus are provided below:

'I would be grateful if you could complete the attached short questionnaire, or pass it on to ...' (NT02)

'In order to provide the necessary information accurately and promptly to both the analyst and the investor, we would appreciate it if you would send us a copy of your company's prospectus/financial report ...' (NT11)

'Thus we would be very much obliged if you could send us TEMIC's international telecommunications programmes ...' (TH19)

'We would be highly appreciated if you could kindly provide us the list of toy importers in United Kingdom ...' (TH49)

'We would very much appreciate an early inspection of the premises so that refund of the deposit of Baht 40,000.00 can be made.' (NT03)

'We would appreciate your assistance in asking EATG for the following:...' (TH17)

'The Language Center would greatly appreciate financial assistance for both of these activities.' (TH32)

'We would appreciate your help in identifying two of your staff preferably one female and one male, to participate in the regional workshop.' (TH58)

In my data, the self-obligation statement can be realised by two main lexical items. The first one is the 'if-clause' with the expression of gratitude or appreciation such as 'grateful', 'obliged' and 'appreciate'. (see the first four underlined samples above). This type of request is most frequently found in the category of declarative mood (26 out of 70 declarative requests). These if-clause 'self-obligation' requests are found in 17 NT letters and 9 TH letters. The second lexical item is the use of 'would appreciate + Noun' as in the last four examples above. There are 9 requests of this

type, 7 of which are from the TH letters and 2 of which are from the NT letters. It seems that the ‘if-clause’ with the expression of gratitude or appreciation is used more extensively among the NT letters whereas the TH letters tend to use both if-clause and ‘would appreciate + Noun’ in a rather equal proportion.

In conclusion, declarative is the most frequently used mood type of request sentences in both TH and NT letters, which accounts for 54% of the total requests. The linguistic realisation of declarative requests is through ‘need’, ‘wish’ and ‘self-obligation’ statements. The data reveal that the self-obligation statement is most frequently used, especially in the NT letters.

#### **5.4.2 Imperative**

Halliday (1994:43) states that an independent major clause is either indicative or imperative in mood. The imperative mood type consists of clauses beginning with the base form of verb. For example,

‘Please fax the completed questionnaire to +44 171 467 3659.’ (NT02)

‘Please give me any comment or advice.’ (TH68)

It is interesting that every imperative clause in my request corpus has the politeness marker ‘please’. The linguistic realisation of imperative requests here is through the use of the base form of verb preceded with ‘please’, which express what the writer would like the reader to do, such as in the examples above: ‘please fax...’ and ‘please give me...’. There are 29 imperative requests in my data, 13 of which are from the TH letters and 16 of which are from the NT letters. Of all 29 imperative requests, 18 are of the form ‘please + base form of verb’. Two imperative clauses begin with ‘kindly’, another politeness marker which has the same function as ‘please’. For example, ‘Kindly advise us whether there is an APO society or alumni in your country.’ (NT24) There are also five imperative requests in the form of ‘if-clause’.



For example, ‘If possible please add me to your distribution list for future publications.’ (NT07) and ‘If so please let me know exactly what information you require and how I can make any payments that may be necessary.’ (NT58). The remaining four imperative requests contain both politeness marker ‘please’ and adverb ‘kindly’, for example, ‘Please kindly inform the name, address, & telephone number of the companies.’ (TH54) This type of imperative is only found in the TH letters, which seems to indicate more politeness and formality.

In sum, interrogative is the second most frequently used mood type of the request sentences in my corpus. It is found in 13 TH letters and 16 NT letters. Of all the three formats (‘please’, ‘if-clause with please’ and ‘please kindly’ + base form of verb), the first one (‘please + base form of verb’) is the most popular, and the last one (‘please kindly + base form of verb’) is only found in the TH letters.

### **5.4.3 Polar Interrogative**

Halliday (1994:74) clarifies that within the category of interrogative, there is a further distinction between yes-no interrogative, for polar questions and WH- interrogative, for content questions. As WH- or content interrogative is not found in my data, we will only look at polar interrogative here. Of all 129 requests, there are only 4 requests in the form of a yes-no or interrogative, 3 of which are from the NT corpus and only one from the TH corpus, for example,

‘Also are there particular hotel groups or ground travel arrangers who offer travel agents discounts?’ (NT67)

‘Do you want to take part of this competition as well?’ (TH68)

‘If you are unable to help, do you know of anyone else that I could contact who may be of assistance?’ (NT73)

It is interesting that the NT and TH writers use very few interrogative requests without modals. They are not found in any letter or fax in my corpus. The above four examples are from emails. Although the first and the last examples are in the form of

yes-no interrogative, it can be noted that the writers do not only expect yes/no answers, but also some more information, for example, in NT67 the name of some hotel groups, and in NT73 the name of a contact person. This mood type is the least frequently used in my data. It is found only in 3 NT and only one TH requests in the emails and accounts for only 3% of the total requests.

#### 5.4.4 Modal-Initial Interrogative

This category, according to Yli-Jokipii (1994), refers to the type of request that starts with a modal verb. She states ‘The English modals covered *can*, *could* (ability, possibility), *will* (volition), *will* (future), *will* (possibility), *shall* (future), *should*, *would* (hypothetical), *should* (obligation, necessity), *should* (inversion), *may* (permission), *may* (epistemic possibility), *must*, *have to* (obligation, necessity).’ (ibid:164) Although the syntactic structure of the modal-initial utterance is of interrogative with the modal in the initial position followed by the second-person pronoun ‘you’, its function is to request. For example, the clause ‘Could you please return the questionnaire’ is a request which does not solicit a yes/no response, but expects the reader to do something for the writer, in this case – return the questionnaire. It is interesting that there are only two modals found in my data: ‘would’ and ‘could’ There are four main types of linguistic realisation; namely, ‘could you please’, ‘would you please’, ‘please could you’, and ‘could you’ (without the politeness marker ‘please’). The most frequently used type is ‘could you please’, for example,

‘In order to keep the data as accurate and timely as possible **could you please** ensure that Datastream International is added to your mailing list.’ (NT12)

‘**Could you please** make the meeting at 9.00 a.m. on November 15, 1999 at Unilever House?’ (NT26)

‘**Could you kindly** sponsor us for this amount?’ (TH32)



In TH32, 'kindly' is used instead of 'please', but still has the same function as the politeness marker. It should be noted that the modals do not necessarily appear at the beginning of the sentence as long as they are at the initial position of the verbal group in the major clause. (see NT12 above) This type of linguistic realisation for modal-initial requests is found in 6 NT letters and 4 TH letters. The second type is 'would you please', for example,

**'Would you please** add me to your mailing list for future literature.' (NT02)

**'Would you please** send us the information on TELIA's international training programmes on Telecommunications and relevant subjects ....' (TH20)

**'Would you please** advise me where I can obtain more information on the waterfalls in your Country and an indication of the costs that may be incurred.' (NT63)

'Would you please' realisation is found in 3 NT and 2 TH letters. The third type is 'please could you'. Yli-Jokipii (1994:166) states, 'The utterance-initial please which occurs with could or would may be considered a token of an effort to intensify the directive force of the message (Holmberg 1979:226)'. The examples from my corpus are as follows:

**'Please could you** transfer the October amount immediately and then all future amounts on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.' (NT29)

**'Please could you** specify the picture which you would like to have ...' (TH65)

**'Please could you** send me any information available.' (NT67)

This type of realisation is found in 4 NT letters and only 1 TH letter. When the politeness marker 'please' is placed before the modal 'could', it seems to intensify the request. The last type is the modal-initial without 'please', for example,

**'If you think that there is a good possibility for me to trade with a company in Thailand, could you** also give me information relative to business visas....' (NT46)

**'Could you** look through the following sheet and let us have your approval.' (NT60)

**'Could you** forward any relevant information to: ...' (NT74)

This type of modal-initial request is only found in 6 letters which are all NT letters. Thus it can be assumed that the TH writers tend to use more politeness marker ‘please’ in their requests. It is noticeable that the modal-initial mood type has the you-orientation, similar to the imperative mood type. The NT letters use this mood type more extensively than the TH letters. Modal-initial mood accounts for 20% of the total requests (26 out of 129 requests), which means the third most used type after declarative and imperative. It is found in 19 NT letters and only 7 TH letters.

So far I have discussed the textual features and linguistic realisation of 129 request sentences in my corpus. The main points are summarised in the following table:

**Table 5.10: Linguistic Realisation of Requests**

Type	NT <i>N</i> = 70	TH <i>N</i> = 59	Features	Remarks
Declarative <i>N</i> = 70 (54%)	32	38	1. ‘Need’ statement 2. ‘Wish’ statement 3. ‘Self-obligation’ statement 3.1 If-clause 3.2 Would appreciate + Noun	‘Self-obligation’ is the most extensively used type of declarative, especially in the form of If-clause. It is commonly found in the NT requests whereas over half of the TH requests use ‘wish’ statement especially with the term ‘would like to’.
Imperative <i>N</i> = 29 (23%)	16	13	1. Please (or Kindly) + base form of verb 2. If-clause + please + base form of verb 3. Please kindly + base form of verb	Imperative is the second most used type after declarative. ‘Please kindly + verb’ is only found in the TH requests which expresses extra politeness and formality.
Polar Interrogative <i>N</i> = 4 (3%)	3	1	Yes-no questions (e.g. Are there...?, Do you...?)	Polar interrogative is the least frequently used type. It is only found in 1 TH and 3 NT emails.



Modal-initial Interrogative <i>N</i> =26 (20%)	19	7	1. Could you please... 2. Would you please... 3. Please could you... 4. Could you...	The NT requests use this type more than the TH ones. The modal-initial (could you) without ‘please’ is only found in 6 NT requests.
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### 5.5 Discussion of Functions and Linguistic Realisation of Pre-Requests

In her contrastive analysis of written business requests, Yli-Jokipii (1994) does not differentiate both pre-requests and post-requests from the core requests. She regards the three as a whole, which forms her overall data for analysis to which she refers as the ‘requestive message’. She states, ‘The requestive message may thus consist of the core alone, or of the core plus one or more expansions, which may precede, follow or surround the core.’ (ibid:32) However, she does recognise the existence of pre-requests and post-requests by saying, ‘When necessary, the expansions preceding the core will be singled out as pre-request expansions and correspondingly those following the core will be referred to as post-request expansions.’ (ibid:78)

As mentioned earlier in 5.2.2, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) take into consideration the difference between pre-/post-requests and core requests. In their model called the structural representation of written requests, they divide requests into pre-requests, requests, and post-requests. According to my data, I believe this is a more precise and accurate way to analyse requests since pre-requests and post-requests have different functions from core requests as you can see in the sample letter provided in 5.2.2. In this discussion, I will focus on the functions and linguistic realisation of pre-requests, which is based on a small-scale corpus since pre-requests, surprisingly, are not extensively found in my corpus.



The definition of a pre-request is somewhat unclear. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996:647) only introduce the term ‘pre-request’ in their above-mentioned model, with a brief explanation in the bracket ‘[*alerter (object, ref., etc) or request supportive move*]’. As there is no further clarification, I then created a set of criteria to use in the selection process of pre-requests in my corpus as follows:

A pre-request acts as an alerter signalling the coming of one or more core requests. It may or may not provide background information or reference to any business issue(s) raised. However, it must explicitly signal or indicate that a request (or more) is to be made. Thus it must precede any core request(s), but does not necessarily appear at the very beginning of the letter. It often justifies the rationale of core request(s).

Taking into account the above criteria, I regard introductory sentences which provide reference or background information as pre-requests if only they explicitly alert or signal the emergence of core request(s). The following examples will illustrate this notion:

[*Request for donation*]:

‘Eaglebrook’s 75<sup>th</sup> academic year is drawing to a close and with it we also near the deadline for the Annual Fund. As you have in previous years, the school and I hope that you will support Eaglebrook in this special year.’ (NT05, first paragraph)

The first sentence of this letter is an introduction that provides some background information to the reader. It is not considered as a pre-request. On the contrary, the underlined second sentence is considered here as a pre-request because it explicitly signals the upcoming request about donation, which is presented in the third paragraph of the letter. Another example is as follows:

[*Request for a change of accommodation*]:

‘Thank you very much for your letter dated 22 February 1991 informing me about the confirmation of registration/accommodation of my participation in the Regional Seminar at RELC from 22-26 April 1991.

I am writing this letter to inform you and request you to make some changes about my status and my accommodation here.’ (TH31, first and second paragraphs)



It can be noted that the first paragraph is merely a reference. The underlined sentence in the second paragraph is considered a pre-request because it acts as an alerter and justifies the rationale of the main purpose of the letter. I have now made clear what is treated as a pre-request. It is important to differentiate between general introductory sentences and ‘pre-request’ sentences because they are of different functions. Because of the extremely diverse nature of introductory sentences depending on the content of each letter, I will focus only on ‘pre-request’ sentences here.

Of all 80 letters of request, only 14 letters contain ‘pre-request’ sentences, which meet my above-mentioned criteria. They consist of 11 TH letters (7 letters, 3 faxes and 1 email), and 3 NT letters. These letters with pre-requests only account for 17.50%. Only one TH letter has a pre-request in the group of Single and Two-Paragraph Texts, and 13 letters (10 TH and 3 NT) in the group of Multi-Paragraph Texts. In summary, pre-requests are predominantly found in the TH letters which especially contain multi-paragraph texts. The following table shows the number of letters with pre-requests in relation to the number of their total paragraphs:

**Table 5.11: Number of pre-requests**

Number of total paragraphs in the letter	Number of letters with pre-requests
2 paragraphs	1
3 paragraphs	4
4 paragraphs	4
5 paragraphs	3
6 paragraphs	2

From the above table, it can be calculated that the average length of the letters which have pre-requests is 4.07 paragraphs. It is interesting that pre-requests are generally found in rather long letters, which implies that the writers of the single or two-paragraph letters prefer to go straight to their main requests without signalling them.

The functions of 14 pre-requests found in my corpus can be viewed as prelude, reference, explanation and/or justification. One pre-request can have either one

function or a combination of two or three functions. For example, TH22 ‘I need to ask you for a big favor’ serves as a prelude signalling that a request is coming. TH45 ‘Further to our telephone conversation, I would like to request your kind assistance regarding how the German Government developed the bond market’ serves as reference (the underlined subordinate clause) and prelude (the main clause). The underlined clause in TH10 ‘We need the information in your 1995 annual report for our research work in our Research and Investment Section’ provides some explanation why the 1995 annual report is needed. TH21 ‘To complete this task, we are in urgent need of the background information on ICQI’ 2000, its objectives and goals etc’ serve as justification (the underlined subordinate clause – the writer justifies the rationale of the request) and prelude (the main clause).

These functions are fundamental to the pre-requests in general. In my data based on a small corpus of pre-requests, there is no specific distinction of functions between the TH and the NT pre-requests. Therefore, I will move on to the linguistic realisation of those pre-requests.

Similar to main requests, the basic textual feature that contributes to linguistic realisation of pre-request is the mood type of the ‘pre-request’ sentences. There is only one mood type here; that is, declarative, which, according to my data, can be classified into two subcategories: 1) ‘need’ statement, 2) ‘wish’ statement:

### *1. ‘Need’ Statement*

The verb ‘need’ is used extensively with the I- or we-orientation. The writer often addresses directly to the reader by using the pronoun ‘you’ or ‘your’ (as in ‘your help’, see below).

‘I **need** to ask you for a big favor.’ (TH22)

‘To continue with the project, I **need** your help.’ (TH23)



‘We aim to make this preview as comprehensive as possible but to enable us to do us [*sic*] we **need** your help.’ (NT56)

‘To complete this task, we are **in urgent need of** the background information on ....’ (TH21)

The last example uses the phrasal verb ‘to be in need of’ to express the writer’s need.

## 2. ‘Wish’ Statement

The writer-perspective or I-/we-orientation is also used here. Instead of the verb ‘need’, the writer seems to soften the tone by using the verbs ‘ask’, ‘hope’, ‘request’ or ‘appeal’, as well as the term ‘would like to + verb’ to express his/her wish. These pre-requests are directly addressed to the reader through the use of ‘you’ and ‘your’ as well. For example,

‘As you have in previous years, the school and I **hope** that you will support Eaglebrook in this special year.’ (NT05)

‘In these activities and developments, it is envisaged that Universities and Industries must work together closely, and with this spirit of partnership, we are **appealing** to your company to help us in the development of international economics and financial managements. (*sic.*)’ (TH06)

‘We **would like to have** this video and booklet be (*sic.*) translated into Thai language [*sic*] so that we can distribute them to ....’ (TH17)

‘We are about to launch a new travel operation utilizing the Internet, and **would like to request** for your co-operation.’ (TH30)

‘I am writing this letter to inform you and **request** you to make some changes ....’ (TH31)

‘Further to our telephone conversation, I **would like to request** your kind assistance regarding ....’ (TH45)

‘We write to your esteem office in regard of **request** (*sic.*) the Canned Foods importer List in your area.’ (TH48)

Note that the TH writers seem to write longer pre-requests than the NT writers. Some of their ‘pre-request’ sentences are wordy such as ‘*I am writing this letter to inform you and request you...*’ in TH31, and ‘*We write to your esteem office in regard of request (sic.)...*’ in TH45. Generally many TH pre-requests are more descriptive and

provide more background information to the reader. The ‘wish’ statement is used more often than the ‘need’ statement. This is based only on the observation of 14 existing examples. More research needs to be conducted to confirm the accuracy of the cross-cultural differences of pre-requests.

## 5.6 Discussion of Functions and Linguistic Realisation of Post-Requests

The definition of a post-request has not been made clear in previous research on request analysis. Yli-Jokipii (1994) mentions that the expansions following the core request(s) are post-request expansions. However, she does not go into any further detail. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) briefly introduce the term ‘post-request’ in their structural representation of written requests. They only provide brief explanation of ‘post-request’ in the bracket as follows: ‘[*emphasis, expansion, thanks*]’. (ibid:647) In order to facilitate the selection process of post-requests in my corpus, a set of criteria for a post-request has been established as follows:

A post-request must follow the core request(s). As a result, it normally appears towards the end of the letter. It is an expansion of the core request(s) that acts as (1) a reminder which echoes, emphasises or summarises the core request(s), or as (2) a closing remark which expresses anticipation, offer (as a gesture of goodwill facilitating the request), and/or thanks to the reader. It can also be a combination of both (1) and (2).

Some examples of post-requests from my corpus are presented below to illustrate this definition:

‘We thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity, and urge you to help make a difference to someone’s life today.’ (TH01)

‘Thank you very much again for your help with our publications and we look forward to hearing from you in the future.’ (NT09)

‘I would like to thank you in advance for your help in supplying us with data.’ (NT12)

Taking into account the above set of criteria, a substantial proportion of the request letters contains post-requests (68 out of 80, which equals 85%). These 68 letters with



post-requests consist of 37 TH letters (54.41%), and 31 NT letters (45.59%). The table below will show the statistics of these letters in terms of their length of text:

**Table 5.12: Number of post-requests**

Type	No. of letters with single or two-paragraph texts that have post-requests	No. of letters with multi-paragraph texts that have post-requests
TH N=37	7 (out of 7)	30 (out of 31)
NT N=31	6 (out of 15)	25 (out of 27)

*N.B. The number in each bracket represents the total number of the letters in each group with particular length of text.*

In the group of single and two-paragraph texts above, post-requests are found in all TH letters (100%), but in only 6 out of 15 NT letters (40%). There is no particular distinction in the group of multi-paragraph texts since both TH and NT letters have post-requests in a similar proportion. However, in this group, there is a range of one to four ‘post-request’ sentences in each letter. Most NT letters have one ‘post-request’ sentence (only 2 out of 25 have two sentences) whereas two, three and four ‘post-request’ sentences are found in thirteen TH letters (nine, two and two respectively). These multiple post-request sentences normally summarise the core requests and express thanks and/or anticipation of the reader’s cooperation. For example,

‘Any kind consideration on this matter will certainly be welcomed and most appreciated.

Thank you very much in anticipation for your kind help. I would be grateful if you could let me know the Wilton Park’s decision in due course.’ (TH43, forth and fifth paragraphs)

‘Thank you very much in advance for your kind assistant (*sic.*) and support. Looking forward to hearing from you by return fax.’ (TH50, third and fourth paragraphs)

‘Accordingly, we are looking forward to hearing the information from you. I hope you will give us the opportunities to perform our new merchandise to the market worldwide.

Thank you for your attention. We shall be very grateful indeed for your help.’ (TH53, fifth and sixth paragraphs)

Perhaps it can be assumed that since the TH letters are normally longer than the NT letters, their post-requests tend to be longer in order to summarise the core requests. From the above examples, we can see that the TH writers express their anticipation and/or gratitude to the reader in a more formal way. This could result from cultural or linguistic transfer. This issue will be investigated and discussed in detail in Chapter 7 and 8. Now we will move on to discuss functions and linguistic realisation of post-requests. It should be noted that all post-requests in 68 letters would be analysed as a whole. I will not differentiate between the post-requests from letters with single and two-paragraph texts and those from letters with multiple-paragraph texts since they are of similar nature and the number of post-request sentences does not always indicate the number of functions. I will start by looking at the functions of post-requests in terms of single and multiple functions. Then I will explore the nature of each function in relation to its linguistic realisation.

According to my data, the functions of post-requests can be divided into four main categories: reminder, thanks, anticipation and offer. Although many post-requests contain a combination of two or three functions, it seems that the NT writer here prefers to use the ‘single-function’ post-request rather than the ‘multi-function’ one. Of all 31 NT post-requests, 24 are single-function post-requests whereas only 7 are multi-function post-requests. The TH writer tends to use both types of post-requests in a similar proportion, that is, 19 single-function, and 18 multi-function post-requests. To illustrate this, I will first explore the functions of post-requests in terms of the use of single function, and multiple functions.

### **5.6.1 Single-function Post-requests**

The single function means that a post-request is of one of the four categories mentioned above. Of all 68 letters with post-requests, 43 letters [19 TH (44%) and 24 NT (56%)] have ‘single function’ post-requests. They can be categorised as follows:



**Table 5.13: Single-function post-requests**

Type	Reminder	Thanks	Anticipation	Offer
TH N=19	0	13 (68%)	2 (11%)	4 (21%)
NT N=24	1 (4%)	16 (67%)	7 (29%)	0

These post-requests are always short, and mostly contain one sentence. It is noticeable that the number of the TH post-requests in this category is smaller than that of the NT post-requests, with no ‘reminder’ and much less ‘anticipation’. Examples of single-function post-requests are as follows:

[Reminder]

‘As we would like to have the information soonest possible, kindly give this matter your urgent attention.’ (NT24)

[Thanks]

‘Thank you in advance.’ (NT08)

‘Thank you very much.’ (TH15)

‘Thank you for your kind consideration.’ (TH16 & TH18)

‘We thank you for your kind co-operation.’ (NT11)

‘Thank you for your attention. We shall be very grateful indeed for your help.’ (TH53)

[Anticipation]

‘Awaiting for your earliest reply.’ (TH13)

‘I look forward to meeting you.’ (NT26)

‘Looking forward to hearing from you soon,’ (TH54)

‘We look forward to hearing from you.’ (NT56)

[Offer]

‘If you have any questions, please feels (*sic.*) free to contact us.’ (TH33)

‘For your convenience while you were in BKK, you will be provided with mobile phone no. 01-888-9999 or pager no 151 or 152 call 432100 or if you would like to have anything, please feel free to let me know.’ (TH04)

It should be noted that I adopted here the ‘single’ function coding which focuses on one main function of each clause. Sometimes a clause may contain other minor function(s), but I will only look at its main function. In the first example (NT24) under ‘reminder’ above, the terms ‘soonest’ and ‘urgent’ suggest a sense of urgency, but the main function of the whole clause is to remind the reader of the request. Thus I considered this post-request as ‘reminder’. Another example is ‘Thank you in advance.’ (NT08). This clause may implicitly convey a sense of anticipation which expresses through the term ‘in advance’. However, its main function is ‘thanks’. Of all the four functions, ‘thanks’ is the most popular type among the single-function post-requests in my data.

5.6.2 Multi-function Post-requests

The post-requests in this category contain multiple functions, a combination of either two or three functions. 25 letters [18 TH (72%) and 7 NT (28%)] have this type of post-request. They can be categorised in the following table:

Table 5.14: Multi-function post-requests

Type	Thanks + Anticipation	Thanks + Offer	Thanks + Reminder	Thanks + Anticipation + Offer	Thanks + Reminder + Anticipation	Offer + Reminder + Anticipation
TH N=18	10	2	1	2	2	1
NT N=7	2	1	2	1	1	0

*N.B. The positions of each group of functions are flexible and do not have to be in the orders presented above.*

The TH post-requests tend to extensively use the pattern of ‘thanks + anticipation’. The NT post-requests are much smaller in number and none of them uses the pattern ‘offer + reminder + anticipation’. Both TH and NT examples are as follows:

[Thanks + Anticipation]

‘Thank you very much again for your help with our publications and we look forward to hearing from you in the future.’ (NT09)



‘Your prompt reply would be very much appreciated and thank you for your kindest cooperations (*sic.*) and best assistance at all times.’ (TH20)

‘We do hope to receive your kind attention. Thank you very much.’ (TH52)

‘Many thanks for your help, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.’ (NT62)

[Thanks + Offer]

‘Thank you for your time and help. If you would like a copy of the survey results, please indicate on the questionnaire.’ (NT02)

‘I thank you for your assistance. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to call me on...’ (NT07)

‘Thank you for your kind co-operation. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact...’ (TH49)

[Thanks + Reminder]

‘I would very much appreciate it, if you would let me know about my request, especially about Ms Pornpa-nga’s and my accommodation, before our travel to Singapore.’ (TH31)

‘I would like to thank you in advance for any information or publications that you are able to send for our library.’ (NT42)

[Thanks + Anticipation + Offer]

‘Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Khun Nararat Nonthachart at 321-9876.

Thank you for your kind consideration. We look forward to meeting with you in person as scheduled.’ (TH04)

[Thanks + Reminder + Anticipation]

‘Any kind consideration on this matter will certainly be welcomed and most appreciated.

Thank you very much in anticipation for your kind help. I would be grateful if you could let me know the Wilton Park’s decision in due course.’ (TH43, fourth and fifth paragraphs consecutively)

‘Accordingly, we are looking forward to hearing the information from you. I hope you will give us the opportunities to perform our new merchandise to the market worldwide.

Thank you for your attention. We shall be very grateful indeed for your help.’ (TH53, fifth and sixth paragraphs consecutively)

[Offer + Reminder + Anticipation]

‘Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact... We hope to receive your valued promotion support and to host a very successful cosmetic event in Thailand for the year 2001.’ (TH37)

Post-requests with multiple functions tend to be longer than those with a single function. It can be noted that one post-request sentence here may have more than one function. (e.g. NT09, TH20, TH31, NT42) Many post-requests in this category have multiple sentences, each of which sometimes represents different functions of post-requests. (e.g. TH04, TH37, TH43, TH53) The post-requests with three functions are often written consecutively in different paragraphs. (e.g. TH43, TH53)

To sum up, a composite table of the functions of post-requests with the summary of discussion is presented below:

**Table 5.15: Functions of post-requests**

Type	Function	TH vs NT post-requests
1. Single-function  TH=19, NT=24	Reminder  Thanks  Anticipation	This type of post-request are short and concise (mostly consist of one clause). 44% are TH post-requests while the rest 56% are NT's. 'Thanks' is the most used function. 'Reminder' alone is not found in TH post-requests, and 'Offer' is not found in NT post-requests.
2. Multi-function  TH=18, NT=7	Thanks + Anticipation Thanks + Offer Thanks + Reminder Thanks + Anticipation + Offer Thanks + Reminder + Anticipation Offer + Reminder + Anticipation	The combination of functions seems to make the post-requests longer with the use of complex clauses. 72% are TH post-requests, whereas just 28% are NT's. The most used pattern is 'Thanks + Anticipation'. 'Offer + Reminder + Anticipation' is not found in NT post-requests.



So far I have explained the functions of post-requests found in my data. Now I will move on to discuss the linguistic realisation of post-requests in relation to the four main functions (Reminder, Thanks, Anticipation and Offer).

In the light of this linguistic realisation, the nature of the functions of post-requests would be exemplified more clearly. Based on my data, there are some common linguistic features that typically realise each function of post-requests. Please note that I adopted the ‘single’ function coding in each example. Although some examples have multiple functions, I will concentrate on the points related to the linguistic realisation which are underlined and/or written in bold. This observation is presented in Table 5.16, followed by a discussion.

Table 5.16: Linguistic realisation of post-requests

Type of function	Linguistic realisation	Examples
1. Reminder	<div>1.1 Lexical item(s) related to the request(s)</div> <div>1.2 If-clause ‘I would appreciate it/would be grateful if you could/would let me know + [the request]’</div>	<div>‘As we would like to have the <b>information</b> soonest possible, kindly give this <b>matter</b> your urgent attention.’ (NT24)</div> <div>‘We hope to receive your valued <b>promotion support</b> and to host a very successful cosmetic event in Thailand for the year 2001.’ (TH37)</div> <div>‘<u>I would very much appreciate it, if you would let me know</u> about <b>my request</b>, especially about Ms Pornpa-nga’s and my accommodation, before our travel to Singapore.’ (TH31)</div> <div>‘<u>I would be grateful if you could let me know</u> the Wilton Park’s <b>decision</b> in due course.’ (TH43)</div>
2. Thanks	<div>2.1 Plain thanks (no explanation of what ‘thanks’ is for)</div> <div>2.2 Elaborated thanks (more subtle and strategic form of thanks in which the writer states the reason for thanking the reader)</div>	<div>‘Thank you very much.’ (TH15)</div> <div>‘Thank you.’ (TH44)</div> <div>‘<u>Thank you so much</u> and looking forward to hearing from you.’ (TH68)</div> <div>[Expression of thanks]</div> <div>‘Thank you for your time and help.’ (NT02)</div> <div>‘Thank you very much for your kind help.’ (TH51)</div> <div>‘We thank you for your kind co-operation.’ (NT11)</div> <div>[Expression of gratitude]</div> <div>‘I would be <b>grateful</b> for any help you can provide.’ (NT40)</div> <div>‘Thank you for your attention. We shall be <b>very grateful</b> indeed for your help.’ (TH53)</div>





‘Thanks’ is the most frequently used function of the post-requests in my corpus. It can appear on its own or with other functions as presented in Table 5.13 and 5.14. 53 out of 68 letters with post-requests or 80% contain ‘thanks’ either on its own or with one or two more functions. My data suggest that there are two main types of ‘thanks’; that is, *plain* thanks and *elaborated* thanks. The NT writers tend to use a more variety of patterns of ‘thanks’ than TH writers as they include ‘Thanking you in anticipation for...’ and ‘Many thanks for...’ as well as ‘I/We + (would like to) thank you (in advance) for...’. The TH writers prefer to use a more formulaic expression of thanks ‘Thank you (very much) (in advance) for...’. The terms ‘in advance’ or ‘in anticipation’ also convey the sense of expectation/anticipation. However, they are not explicit enough to establish the function of ‘anticipation’ in this context as I adopted the single-function coding and the main focus here is ‘thanks’. The TH post-requests use expressions of appreciation more frequently than the NT ones. Both plain and elaborated thanks reveal some assumption by the writer that the reader will comply with his/her request.

‘Anticipation’ is the second most used function of post-requests in my corpus. There are 28 out of 68 letters with post-requests that contain ‘anticipation’ statements either alone or with one or two more functions, which accounts for 41%. The NT writer tends to use ‘anticipation’ on its own rather than with other functions whereas the TH writer prefers the combination of functions. In general more TH post-requests contain ‘anticipation’ and the most popular pattern is ‘Anticipation + Thanks’. It should be noted that in her analysis of request, Yli-Jokipii (1994) regards ‘anticipation statements’ as requests because she does not differentiate pre-requests, requests and post-requests. She reveals that anticipation statements are the most common type of routine declarative requests in her corpus. She says, ‘Anticipation statements are realized by a lexical item denoting *hoping, liking to do (sic.), looking forward* and *awaiting*, etc...’ (ibid:173) This is similar to the linguistic features of the anticipation statements in my corpus in which the idiom ‘look forward to’ is most

extensively found. Yli-Jokipii (1994:127) states that the use of 'look forward' formula in the closing position is comparable to the prosodic means included in leave-taking turn in spoken exchange. The use of the verb 'hope' and appreciative strategies is mostly found in TH post-requests which mainly contain another function such as 'thanks'.

'Offer' can be considered as a facilitating move that helps soften tone of the request letter by making the request seem less condensed or brief. In general, 'offer' tends to convey a gesture of goodwill which may be an inducement and/or an offer to accommodate what the reader may need. The writer attempts to show goodwill to the reader, who is supposed to comply with the main request(s), by assuring the reader that full support is available if needed. This function is found in 9 TH and only 2 NT post-requests, mostly in the form of 'If-clause' with the politeness marker 'please'.

In conclusion, while only 14 letters of request (mostly TH) contain pre-requests, 68 have post-requests. They consist of 37 TH and 31 NT letters. The functions of post-requests are of four types: Reminder, Thanks, Anticipation and Offer. From my data, the NT writers use the 'single-function' post-request more extensively than the 'multi-function' or combination one, while the TH writers tend to use both types of post-requests rather equally. 'Thanks' is the most frequently used function of post-requests both on its own as a single function and with another function(s) especially 'anticipation'. The linguistic realisation was presented in Table 5.16. It is evident that TH writers generally use more formulaic expressions of thanks although they tend to use more expressions of appreciation as elaborated thanks. They also prefer to combine 'thanks' with 'anticipation' whereas NT writers favour either 'thanks' or 'anticipation' on its own. The TH writers use more 'offer' than the NT writers do. 'Reminder' is rather uncommon and generally appears with 'thanks' and/or 'anticipation'. The TH post-requests are normally longer and sometimes consist of many sentences expressing thanks and anticipation in a more repetitive yet formal



way. The mood types in both TH and NT post-requests are either declarative or imperative with the politeness marker ‘please’. The following section will provide the comparison of some interesting features in the TH and NT requests as a whole.

## **5.7 Cross-Cultural Comparison between the TH and NT Requests**

The cross-cultural variation will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. In this section, I will simply examine some interesting features in the TH and NT main elements of request (pre-requests, core requests and post-requests). First we will look at the we- and you-orientations, then I will select a few pairs of TH and NT requests, each of which has the similar purposes of writing, and compare their features and request strategies.

### **5.7.1 We- and You-Orientations**

Jenkins and Hinds (1987) analyse letters of request in textbooks in American English, French and Japanese, and report the frequent use of the pronoun ‘you’ in American letters, which tends to make them more reader-oriented. In a similar vein, Bhatia (1993) introduces the we- and you-orientations in his study of sales promotion letters as discussed in Chapter 4. Both orientations are used extensively in the sales promotion letters and letters of request in my corpus. It should be noted that the we-orientation involves writing from the writer’s perspectives, thus the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ are often used. The you-orientation is apparent when the writer writes from the reader’s perspectives, e.g. indicating the interest/need of the reader or highlighting the mutual benefits.

Both we- and you-orientations are found in both TH and NT letters of request. It is interesting that the we-orientation is predominant in the request messages as the writer is likely to be specific by stating what he/she requests from the reader. For example,

‘We would very much appreciate an early inspection of the premises so that refund of the deposit of Baht 40,000.00 can be made.’ (NT03)

‘Therefore I would like to enquiry [*sic*] about the figure [*sic*] of how many airports in Thailand in the year of 1979.’ (TH64)

‘Please send brochures to the following addresses: ...’ (NT70)

Unlike the sales promotion letters, the request letters do not seem to address the interest or need of the reader because they are typically written on the basis of the writer’s need. Although the pronouns ‘you’ and ‘your’ are often used, the underlying emphasis is we-orientation. For example,

‘Due to the time constraint, the Bangkok Office of Solomon Brothers, acting as meeting coordinator, would appreciate some indications from your office of your availability on Thursday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998 at 3.15p.m. so that we can schedule the meeting to be as effective as possible.’ (TH04)

‘Please let me know your thoughts. Things are still being shaped, I would very much welcome your opinions and suggestions.’ (TH23)

‘If you think that there is a good possibility for me to trade with a company in Thailand, could you also give me information relative to business visas, ...’ (NT46)

‘You could send this information through mail, email or even send fax, whatever you think is convenient for you.’ (TH47)

‘You can conveniently send importer list by e-mail to our address: ... or by fax at ...’ (TH51)

These requests are slightly different from the requests in the form of ‘I/We would like you to...’ or ‘Please do this...’, because they tend to show concerns for the readers’ advice/support/expertise, which helps soften the tone of the requests. They are found more often in the TH requests. Interestingly, there is one TH request with neither we- nor you-orientation:

‘To meet this objective, it deems very beneficial if Thailand receives first-hand information like printed materials, video tapes, copies of pictures from the archives, relevant photographs and posters, etc. from the IMO. In this



regard, the IMO's contribution to the preparation and the success of the above-mentioned events would be most appreciated.' (TH34)

This request is from the Thai embassy in London. It is long and very indirect. This could be considered as the topic-orientation in which the writer tends to focus on the topic of request more than the company or the reader. This type of orientation is found particularly in the introduction part of the letter when the writer makes reference to previous contact or gives background information of the company. Among the NT and TH requests, this example is the only one with such orientation. It is impersonal and implies some distance between the writer and the reader.

The above discussion is based on the orientations found in the main requests. The we-orientation tends to be predominant in both TH and NT letters of request. There does not appear to be a clear-cut distinction in the use of we- and you-orientations in the request letters between both groups. What stands out more is the fact that some TH requests can be indirect, more formal and deferential.

### **5.7.2 Some Request Strategies in the NT and TH Requests**

As the letters of request in my corpus come from different sources and have diverse nature, it is hard to compare the NT and TH letters in terms of request strategies because they are context-dependent. However, there are a number of TH and NT letters which have similar types of purposes that can be compared against one another. I have selected four pairs of TH and NT requests for comparison. Each pair has a similar purpose, which are precise enough to be cross-examined against each other.

#### ***1. Requests for donation***

'We would, therefore, like to invite you and your organization to participate in this "tum boon" by purchasing some greeting cards and being a part of our good intentions. Samples of cards and an order form are enclosed.'  
(TH01)

‘I ask you to join me in making a gift to this year’s Annual Fund. Please return your gift today in the enclosed reply envelope and help us set a new record for participation.’ (NT05)

Both requests ask for a donation. The first one is a TH request with an aim to raise money for education of Thai rural children and disabled people by selling greeting cards. The second one is an NT request asking purely for donation to support student scholarships in a specific school in the United States. The TH request uses the verb ‘invite’ while the NT one uses the verb ‘ask’. There is a Thai word in the TH request. This TH letter is written in English by a Thai person to another Thai person. ‘Tum boon’ means to make merit such as giving food to the monks, and making a donation to the charity. It is interesting that both requests do not mention the words ‘money’ or ‘donation’ at all. The NT request uses the word ‘gift’ which the writer means financial donation. The difference between these two requests is the way the writer encourages response. The TH writer only indicates the enclosure of card samples and an order form whereas the NT writer directly asks the reader to return the ‘gift’ in the enclosed envelope. This reveals directness in the NT request, which a Thai person might find it a little bit pushy or too straightforward.

## ***2. Requests for annual report***

‘Since BTFSC also has foreign shareholders and some of our clients are foreigners investing in the SET, we would be very grateful if you could send us two copies of the report in Thai and English (if any).’ (TH10)

‘Please note that I am interested in obtaining information concerning your organisation, could you please send me two copies of your last annual report and third quarter earnings. If possible please add me to your distribution list for future publications.’ (NT07)

These two requests are not very different on the surface. However, if we read carefully, we can see that the TH writer in the first example makes an attempt to explain why she needs annual reports. An element of gratitude is expressed here in addition to that in the post-request (which is ‘Thank you for your attention and



cooperation’). The NT writer only expresses his interest in obtaining annual reports and is very specific with his request by saying ‘last annual report and third quarter earnings’. An element of thanks is found only in his post-request ‘Thank you in advance for your assistance’. It can be noted that the tone of request in the TH letter is softer than the NT one. But apart from this, there is no other notable difference between the two requests.

### 3. *Request for appointment*

‘Due to time constraint, the Bangkok Office of Solomon Brothers, acting as meeting coordinator, would appreciate some indications from your office of your availability on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1997 at 3:15p.m. so that we can schedule the meeting to be as effective as possible.’ (TH04)

‘Could you please make the meeting at 9.00 a.m. on November 15, 1999 at Unilever House? Please be in the hotel reception at 8.00 a.m. and please acknowledge receipt of this fax.’ (NT26)

The TH writer in the first example uses a complex clause to express his request while the NT writer in the second example uses short request sentences. An element of appreciation is only found in the TH request. The NT request seems more direct and less formal. Like the TH request for annual report, the TH request here tends to provide explanation which makes it different from the NT request.

### 4. *Requests for information*

We would be highly appreciated if you could kindly provide us the list of toy importers in United kingdom for further business relationship. (TH49)

I need information on official Thai policy and priorities in the area of conservation and biodiversity and how they apply to marine ecosystems. (NT40)

These two requests aim for different type of information. However, they both ask for document-based information. Like the TH requests for annual report and

appointment, here the TH writer include a reason for his request ('for future business relationship'. An element of appreciation is also used, which makes his request more polite when compared to the NT request. The NT writer uses the we-orientation with the use of the pronoun I + the verb 'need'. This seems to add an element of directness in his request.

From the above examples, it may be assumed that the TH writers tend to add some explanation to strengthen their requests. They also use an element of gratitude or appreciation in their main requests in addition to those expressed in the post-requests. These features are found in many other TH requests which are not presented here. Perhaps they can be viewed as their request strategies. As for the NT requests, they seem to be more direct and straightforward. Some do have an element of gratitude or appreciation in their main requests, but to a lesser extent than the TH requests. The NT writers normally use plain, less complex request sentences which are precise and to the point. We can argue that this depends on the power and status of the writer in relation to the reader. As explained earlier this is not easy to specify, and is not the focus of this study. The discussion above aims to find if there are similarities and differences in the request strategies of some comparable TH and NT requests that are developed along similar purposes.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter attempts to shed light on cross-cultural business requests written in English in the Thai business context. The main findings report on the textual features and linguistic realisations of the core requests, pre-requests and post-requests. The mood types of the NT and TH requests are slightly different. The TH requests use more declaratives than the NT requests. The latter uses a greater variety of mood types; that is, more imperatives, polar interrogatives and modal-initial interrogatives. There is evidence that the TH letters of request are on average longer and include



more politeness markers. Indeed, some expressions are only found in the TH letters (e.g. 'please kindly...') whereas modal-initial requests without the politeness marker 'please' are only found in the NT letters.

The TH letters generally use more pre- and post-requests which are longer than those typically found in the NT letters. The TH post-requests include extensive formulaic expressions of thanks and expressions of appreciation, and tend to combine them with expressions of anticipation. Differences in orientation reported in previous studies were not distinct here as most TH and NT letters use both we- and you-orientations rather equally (with an emphasis on the we-orientation only in the main requests). The 'quasi-inductive style of writing' or 'delayed introduction of purpose' is observed. While a large number of the NT requests start early at the beginning of the letters, many TH requests seem to have a 'delayed introduction of purpose' because they appear in the medial and penultimate paragraphs rather than in the initial paragraph.

Some request strategies have been examined through pairs of TH and NT requests with similar purposes. This comparison reveals that the TH writers tend to include more explanations to strengthen their requests. They also use more expressions of gratitude and/or appreciation in their main requests in addition to those expressed in the post-requests. Perhaps these features can be viewed as Thai-style request strategies.

The overall investigation manifests the diversity in culture and language use which distinguishes the request writing of Thais from that of native English speakers. The differences can lead to possible risks of communication discrepancies for both parties. The NT requests may be viewed as 'too direct and straightforward' if they include no politeness marker, explanation or expression of gratitude. The TH requests may be

seen as ‘too polite’ if they duplicate (e.g. please kindly) and offer repeated explanations or expressions of gratitude.



## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS OF INVITATION

Invitations to business-related social or professional activities are part of persuasive business communication. With business and social purposes often combined, letters of invitation thus play an important role in both local and international business communications.

This chapter will explore the nature of letters of invitation written in English by Thais and by native speakers of English. A comparison of the rhetorical patterns and their linguistic realisations will be presented with the aim of identifying any cultural-specific features or local socio-cultural constraints which may differentiate the invitation style of Thais from that of native English speakers.

#### 6.1 Working Definitions

An invitation can be regarded as a *performative* speech act. According to Austin's (1962:6) Speech Act Theory, a *performative* indicates, 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action'. Although the verb 'to invite' is not mentioned in his seminal study, a link can be created because it reflects the act of 'announcing an intention' (ibid:98). Following Austin (1962), Searle (1969, 1975, 1976) expands the concept of speech act further by focusing on 'illocutionary acts' or 'indirect speech acts'. He develops a set of those acts, one of which is called 'directives' which range from asking to commanding. Inviting falls into this category according to Searle's (1976:11) list of directive verbs (i.e. ask, order, command, request, beg, plead, pray, entreat, invite, permit, and advise.) Searle (1976:11) states, 'The illocutionary point of these consists in the fact that they are attempts (of varying degrees, and hence, more precisely, they are determinates of the determinable which includes attempting)

by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. They may be very modest ‘attempts’ as when I invite you to do it or suggest that you do it, or they may be very fierce attempts as when I insist that you do it.’ It is interesting that unlike requests in which cross-cultural studies based on speech act have been conducted rather extensively (e.g. Mulholland 1997; Neumann 1997; Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989), invitations seem to be surprisingly understudied in terms of both spoken and written invitations.

To the best of my knowledge, previous studies on letters of invitation are very few and far between. So far I found two studies by Hiranburana (1996) and Zhu (2001) as introduced in Chapter 2. Hiranburana (1996) analyses 18 letters of ‘arranging visits and follow-ups’ in terms of the rhetorical structure. These invitation letters concerning business visits and appointments and replies are written by 3 Thais, 6 native English speakers, and 9 non-Thais-non-native-English speakers. Zhu (2001) compares persuasive strategies in 40 letters of invitation to trade fairs, 20 of which are written in English by native English speakers and the other 20 are written in Chinese by native (mainland) Chinese. None of these studies gives any detailed definition of the letters in their corpus. My corpus contains more varieties of invitation than arranging visits and trade fair invitations. Therefore, it is essential to formulate a working definition of ‘a letter of invitation’ for this study.

Before doing so, it is useful to see how a textbook on business letter writing defines ‘a letter of invitation’. One interesting description is found in the textbook on modern business correspondence by McComas and Satterwhite (1993). They explain that there are two types of invitations in business correspondence: (1) formal invitations and (2) informal invitations. In their opinion, a formal invitation is in the form of an invitation card following an established pattern which is usually printed with each line centered. (e.g. The Board of Directors of X or Mr. X requests the pleasure of the company of Mr Y at ...) Interestingly, they regard a letter of invitation as an



informal invitation. They state, ‘Informal invitations are written in letter format and are more casual than formal invitations. In addition to “inviting”, they should provide the following specifics about the event:

- the day, date, time,
- place
- reason for the function
- Who is included in the invitation
- dress requirements (if any)
- a request for a reply.’ (ibid:147)

I agree with them that there are formal and informal invitations. However, formal and informal are not absolute terms. The degree of formality tends to correlate between (a) mode/layout (e.g. spoken vs written/card vs. letter), (b) occasion (e.g. invitation to opening ceremony of multinational joint venture vs. in-house seminar), (c) role/relationship with the audience (e.g. judging from the forms of address such as Dear sir or madam, Dear Mr + surname, or Dear + first name). Written invitations are generally more formal than spoken ones. The invitation to the opening ceremony of a multinational joint venture is more likely to be in the form of an invitation card whereas that to in-house seminar can simply be in the form of a letter or memo. In the business world nowadays, a letter of invitation is more widely used for setting up business meetings, seminars, conferences or visits. It is socially accepted as a formal invitation, which may be attached with a registration form. An invitation card is exclusively used for occasions such as important receptions or grand opening ceremonies. My corpus does not contain any invitation cards, so we will focus only on letters. As outlined by McComas and Satterwhite (1993) above, a letter of invitation tends to include details such as date, time, place, purpose plus a request for a reply. This gives us some general background of letters of invitation. However, there is no definition of what is meant by ‘a letter of invitation’. The following set of criteria was then devised to identify the letters of invitation in my corpus.

A letter of invitation contains at least one message which aims to invite the reader to take part in a social-business activity<sup>1</sup> by ‘pursuing a verbal, physical or cognitive response’ (Yli-Jokipii 1996) under the following conditions:

- 1) The main purpose of the letter is to invite the reader and/or the reader’s company to take part in a social-business activity organised by the writer and/or the writer’s company on the grounds of corporate and/or personal levels of mutual business relationships.
- 2) The invitation(s) can pursue a verbal, physical or cognitive response depending on the context. In addition to a verbal or cognitive response, a physical response is involved when the writer asks for the reader’s physical appearance in any social-business event such as an organised meeting, seminar, conference, social function or trade-related visit.
- 3) The invitation(s) can include an invitation to join an organisation/club/society (e.g. as a member or honorary member), and an invitation to contribute to a business-related activity (e.g. as chair, member of the board/committee, or special guest). In this case, the invitation pursues a verbal or cognitive response which may or may not involve any immediate physical response.
- 4) The reader and/or reader’s company has an option of refusal. (following Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996)
- 5) The invitation(s)’s ostensible purpose must not be profit-oriented. The letter asking the reader to buy the writer’s product or service is categorised as ‘a letter of sales promotion’. When the invitation to a conference or seminar incurs a registration fee, it is categorised as ‘a letter of invitation’ if its main purpose is to invite (i.e. inviting a particular person whose business is in the same line as the organised event), not to explicitly promote sales to boost profits.

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<sup>1</sup> A social-business activity here refers to any activity which is organised for either business purposes alone (e.g. business conferences/meetings/seminars) or both business and social purposes (e.g. corporate receptions for clients/employees/business guests, club/society events for members). It excludes non-business-related personal activity such as wedding ceremonies, funerals, individual parties, etc.



- 6) The benefits to both sides (the writer and the reader) are primarily in the areas of networking, sharing professional responsibilities, promoting a true image of the company, philanthropy, etc.

In Chapter 5, I discussed the results of my questionnaire survey in which I asked 20 participants to categorise 10 samples of letters. (see 5.1.1 & 5.1.2) Although the questionnaire did not provide any definition of any type of letter, the participants did not seem to have any problem in classifying the letters of invitation. Compared to the letters of request and another type of letter which incorporates a request, the classification of the letters of invitation had the least diversity. Three out of four letters (which I initially categorised as invitation letters) were classified as letters of invitation by 19 out of 20 participants whereas the other one by 16 participants. It may be noted that some participants regarded those letters as letters of request. Following the survey, I have established a working definition for the letter of request, which separates the letters of request from the letters of invitation. The survey results reveal that most people generally have background knowledge of what a letter of invitation is. The above criteria aim to formulate a working definition for the selection of the letters of invitation in my corpus. Every letter that matches these criteria will be classified as a letter of invitation and will be analysed in this chapter. The data classification and examples are presented in the next section.

## **6.2 Data Classification**

There are 40 correspondence texts which can be put in the category of letters of invitation based on the above-mentioned criteria. They consist of 30 letters and 10 faxes. Each fax is in the letter format and shares similar characteristics of a letter (e.g. containing the date, names of the writer and recipient, salutation and complimentary close). Henceforth they will be all referred to as 'letters of invitation'. The following

table will present the proportion of the letters written by Thais (TH) to that written by native English speakers or non-Thais (NT):

**Table 6.1: Number of invitation letters**

Description	NT	TH	Total number of letters
<i>Letters</i>	18	12	30
<i>Faxes</i>	7	3	10
<b>Total proportion</b>	25	15	<b>40</b>

Again, the NT letters are written by native speakers of English from the United Kingdom or the United States of America whose companies have business contacts with Thai companies or organisations. As we can see from the table, there are 25 NT letters and 15 TH letters. Due to the unequal proportion between both types of letters, I will include an indication of percentage in some comparisons where necessary. The sources of these letters vary from local Thai companies, Thai public enterprises to multinational corporations. There are ten main groups of businesses which I have summarised in alphabetical order as follows:

- Conference Organising Service (e.g. the Economist Conferences)
- Consultancy (e.g. Anderson Consulting, the Boston Consulting Group)
- Consumer Products Industry (e.g. Unilever Thai Holdings)
- Cultural Institute (e.g. the Siam Society)
- Education (e.g. Harrow International School)
- Finance (e.g. Asian Development Bank, Warburg Dillon Read, Bank of England)
- Information Technology (e.g. Microsoft)
- Utility Industry (e.g. the Electric Generating Authority of Thailand)
- Public/Governmental Sector (e.g. embassies, offices in economic/commercial affairs)
- Publishing (e.g. FORTUNE business magazine)

The main purpose of each letter is to invite the reader to take part in a social-business activity as outlined in the above-mentioned criteria. From my corpus of 40 letters of invitation, the types of invitation can be classified into 6 groups:



1. Invitations to attend conferences (C), including business forums, summits, and panel discussions
2. Invitations to attend meetings (M), e.g. board meetings, regular/scheduled business meetings, discussions and briefings
3. Invitations to join an organisation/club/society as a member, i.e. inviting the reader to take up the membership (MB)
4. Invitations to attend social-business functions or receptions (R), e.g. breakfast, lunch, dinner, cocktail or other types of social-business parties
5. Invitations to attend seminars (S), including workshops, roadshows and exhibitions
6. Invitations to join trade-related visits (V), e.g. project/trade visits, visits to exhibitions or to another companies

The following table shows the proportion of each type of invitation found in the NT and TH letters of invitation:

**Table 6.2: Types of invitation**

Types of invitation	Number of letter(s) <i>N</i> = 40
1. Invitations to attend conferences (C)	14 (NT=12, TH= 2)
2. Invitations to attend meetings (M)	7 (NT= 4, TH= 3)
3. Invitations to take up a membership (MB)	3 (NT=1, TH= 2)
4. Invitations to attend receptions (R)	5 (NT=4, TH=1)
5. Invitations to attend seminars (S)	6 (NT=2, TH=4)
6. Invitations to join trade-related visits (V)	5 (NT=2, TH=3)

In terms of distribution, there are samples of the TH and NT letters in each type. The most frequently found type here is ‘C’ (invitations to conferences) whereas the least frequently found type is ‘MB’ (invitations to take up a membership). There is a disproportionately large number of NT-C letters and attention will be paid to this to ensure that it does not slow the findings. It may be noted that in general the above types of invitation share similar characteristics especially invitations to conferences, meetings, seminars and visits. The classification is for background information. I will first analyse the 40 letters as a whole, and then differentiate the different types of



invitations where necessary. Occasionally some examples will be marked with the above abbreviations (e.g. NT09-C, TH33-R) to distinguish the types of invitation.

First of all, I will examine the letters in terms of their length. It is measured according to the number of paragraph(s) in each letter. In my corpus, the length of the letters ranges from one to eight paragraphs as displayed in Table 6.3:

**Table 6.3: Number of paragraph(s)**

Number of paragraph(s)	Number of letter(s) <i>N = 40 (25 NT, 15 TH)</i>
1 paragraph	1 (1 NT)
2 paragraphs	4 (3 NT, 1 TH)
3 paragraphs	6 (2 NT, 4 TH)
4 paragraphs	10 (6 NT, 4 TH)
5 paragraphs	10 (6 NT 4 TH)
6 paragraphs	5 (5 NT)
7 paragraphs	3 (1 NT, 2 TH)
8 paragraphs	1 (1 NT)

The letters with 4 and 5 paragraphs are most extensively found. Together they account for 50% of the corpus (20 out of 40 letters). Figure 6.1 presents the number of paragraph(s) in relation to the proportion (in percentage) of the NT and TH letters:

**Figure 6.1: Number of Paragraph(s) in the NT and TH Letters of Invitation**

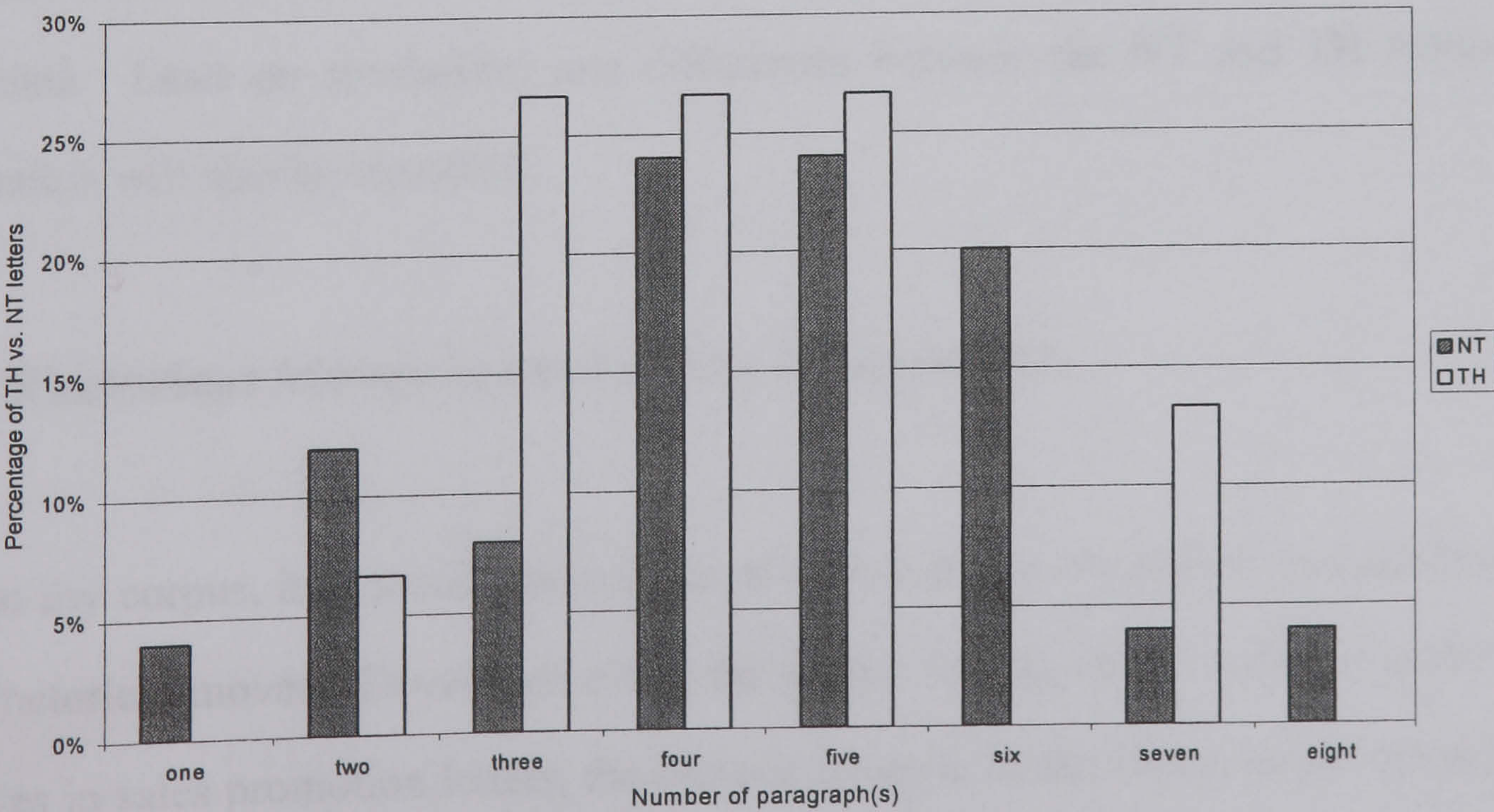




Figure 6.1 shows that the majority of the TH letters of invitation contains three to five paragraphs whereas that of the NT letters has four to six paragraphs. As the NT letters outnumber the TH letters (25 NT vs. 15 TH), I chose to examine their number of paragraph(s) in relation to their percentage in order to get a better overall picture. It seems that the length of the NT letters varies more than that of the TH letters. Unlike the letters of request in which the differences between the NT and TH letters in terms of their length is obvious because the NT letters tend to use fewer paragraphs (see 4.2.2), the letters of invitation are a different case. We can see that the majority of the NT letters of invitation use four to six paragraphs. Here the average number of paragraphs of the NT letters is 4.44 whereas that of the TH letters is 4.27. This is not a big difference. My point is to show that unlike the letters of request in which the NT writers obviously use fewer paragraphs than the TH writers, the NT and TH letters of invitation do not have such difference as most letters range from three to six paragraphs with an average of four paragraphs. I will continue to use the disproportionate corpus of 25 NT and 15 TH letters because my main analysis focuses on the content of the letters. Being aware of this unequal proportion, I guarantee that every care will be taken to ensure that this will not interfere with the main findings.

In the next section I will analyse the forty-letter corpus as a whole in terms of rhetorical moves. Each move will be explained and illustrated with examples from my data. Later on similarities and differences between the NT and TH letters of invitation will also be identified.

### **6.3 Rhetorical Moves in the Letters of Invitation**

From my corpus, it is found that a letter of invitation can be generally characterized by rhetorical moves. Developed along the similar line as Bhatia's (1993) pattern of moves in sales promotion letters, the rhetorical moves in the letters of invitation here are carefully studied and identified using the data in my corpus. They consist of 6

moves, some of which are deemed obligatory in that they are found in every letter, and some are optional. They are presented as follows:

Move 1	Inviting	<i>obligatory</i>
Move 2	Establishing the context (i.e. giving background information, raising the issue, and/or stating purpose)	<i>optional</i>
Move 3	Detailing	<i>obligatory</i>
Move 4	Soliciting response	<i>optional</i> (if missing, then Move 5 appears instead)
Move 5	Anticipating acceptance	<i>optional</i> (if missing, then Move 4 appears instead)
Move 6	Expressing thanks	<i>optional</i>

In my observation of Move 2, *Establishing the context*, in the invitation letters, I do not take into consideration the inside addresses and salutations although they are part of *establishing the context*. This is because my focus is on the use of Move 2, *Establishing the context*, in the content of the letters. Table 6.4 below presents the number and percentage of the NT and TH letters that uses each of the above-mentioned moves:

**Table 6.4: Rhetorical moves in invitation letters**

Rhetorical Moves	Total NT&TH <i>N</i> = 40	Total %	NT Letters <i>N</i> = 25	NT %	TH Letters <i>N</i> = 15	TH %
1. Inviting	40	100%	25	100%	15	100%
2. Establishing the context	28	70%	19	76%	9	60%
3. Detailing	40	100%	25	100%	15	100%
4. Soliciting response	28	70%	17	68%	11	73%
5. Anticipating acceptance	34	85%	22	88%	12	80%
6. Expressing thanks	2	5%	0	0%	2	13%

Move 1, *Inviting*, and Move 3, *Detailing*, are found in every letter and can be considered as main structural components of a letter of invitation. It should be noted that either Move 4, *Soliciting response*, or Move 5, *Anticipating acceptance*, is obligatory because while many letters have both moves, the others include either Move 4 or Move 5. Move 2, *Establishing the context*, is quite extensively found (70% of the letters, or to be specific, 76% of the NT letters and 60% of the TH



letters). Move 6, *Expressing thanks*, is rarely found, which is different from the letters of request and sales promotion. There are only 2 TH letters here that use this move. To illustrate the rhetorical moves as identified above, a detailed analysis of one NT and one TH letter of invitation is presented as follows:

**Sample 6.1: Rhetorical Move Analysis of NT01**

Microsoft  
December 11, 1996  
Mr. Yongyuth Samran  
Chairman  
Thai Citizen’s Bank  
924 Bangsamruay Avenue, GPO Box 1633  
Bangkok 10210  
Thailand

Dear Mr. Samran:

Please join me as my guest May 7-9, 1997, when The Microsoft CEO Summit convenes in Seattle. **Move 1 Inviting**

Technology is reinventing business practices, transforming corporate structure and realigning entire industries. The goal of The Microsoft CEO Summit is to generate and share ideas on how we, as company leaders, can best prepare the corporation for these challenges and opportunities. **Move 2 Establishing the context (raising the issue)**  
**Move 2 Establishing the context (stating purpose)**

The Summit begins with a welcome reception at the Seattle Four Seasons Olympic Hotel on Wednesday evening, May 17<sup>th</sup>. The sessions will commence the following morning and will run to the end of the day. To expand upon the personal relationships that will have been forged throughout the day, we will convene at my home for dinner Thursday evening. The Summit will conclude at 12:30 p.m. on Friday. Optional activities will be offered for the remainder of Friday afternoon. A preliminary agenda is enclosed. **Move 3 Detailing**

A sampling of Summit participation includes: Ronald Compton of *Aetna*; Philip Condit of *Boeing*; Paulo César Ximenes Ferreira of *Banco do Brasil S.A.*; Robert Eaton of *Chrysler*; Lester Alberthal, Jr. of *EDS*; Franco Bernabé of *Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI)*; Andrey Kazmin of Sberbank RF; and William Esray of Sprint. **Move 3 Detailing**

Microsoft is pleased to present this Summit in partnership with FORBES Magazine. My staff will follow up with your office to determine your availability. Attendance is limited, so kindly return the enclosed RSVP by Monday, December 30, 1996. **Move 4 Soliciting response**

Should you have any questions please call 212-602-1255. I hope I will have the pleasure of welcoming you to Seattle. **Move 5 Anticipating acceptance**

Cordially,  
(Signature)  
William H. Gates  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer **Move 3 Detailing**

enc.

Sample 6.2: Rhetorical Move Analysis of TH38

Polytechnology Co, Ltd.

Our ref. PLT01/10420/1998

18 December 1998

Khun Wijai Jaruratrungsarit  
Manager, Electrical & Process Control  
Nestle (Thailand) Co., Ltd.  
Tel No. 562-1199 ext. 262  
Fax No. 562-1196

Dear Khun Wijai

Subject Invitation to attend FR Flow Roadshow Seminar

Move 1 Inviting

We, Polytechnology Co.,Ltd in collaboration with Fisher-Rosemount Singapore Plc.,Ltd would like to invite you to attend ‘A One Day Seminar on Fisher-Rosemount Flow Roadshow’ which will be held on Tuesday 12 January 1999 at 08.30am – 17.00pm (*sic.*) at Radisson Hotel.

Move 1 Inviting

Move 3 Detailing

At this seminar conducted by specialist from Fisher Rosemount Singapore which is not very often held, so, we would like you to take this opportunity to attend it for your benefit and knowledge.

Move 3 Detailing

We will be very much appreciated if you could be able to spend sometimes with us on this seminar, please kindly reserve your seat in advance by filling in the attached sheet and fax to us at (02) 854-1776, by 4 January 1999 or call Khun Nattawan Nichapa at (02) 690-7050 extension 123.

Move 5 Anticipating acceptance

Move 4 Soliciting response

We very much look forward to hearing from you.  
Thank you.

Move 4 Soliciting response  
Move 6 Expressing thanks

Sincerely yours  
(signature)  
Uthai Suwanthip  
Senior Vice President

Attchs : Venue  
Agenda  
Back Ground (*sic.*) Experiences  
Map

Move 3 Detailing

We can see that both examples use almost every rhetorical move presented earlier. Both start with Move 1, *Inviting*. This move is followed by Move 2, *Establishing the context* (raising the issue and stating purpose), in NT01. TH38 does not have Move 2. After *Inviting*, it goes straight to Move 3, *Detailing*, which is shorter and not as informative as that in NT01. NT01 states the deadline for reply in Move 4, *Soliciting response*. It does not have Move 6, *Expressing thanks*, and it ends with Move 5,



*Anticipating acceptance.* TH38, on the other hand, does not state any deadline, and ends with the formulaic expression ‘*look forward to + hearing from you*’, followed by Move 6, *Expressing thanks*.

The above-mentioned six-move pattern seems to be practical and suitable for my data. It should be noted that the sequencing of six rhetorical moves is flexible. The positions of those moves are not required to appear in the same order as presented although it is obvious that Moves 4, 5 and 6 (*Soliciting response, Anticipating acceptance and Expressing thanks*, consecutively) always appear after Move 2, *Establishing the context*, and, in most cases, after Move 3, *Detailing*. Moves 1, 2 and 3 may alternate to appear at the beginning of the letter whereas Moves 4, 5 and 6 can take turn appearing at the end of the letter. This initial sequencing of the moves is to facilitate the rhetorical analysis as a whole. The following part is aimed at giving detailed description of each rhetorical move in this six-move pattern which includes some linguistic realisations where applicable.

### **6.3.1 Move 1 Inviting**

Inviting is the essence of the letter. As the main purpose of the letter of invitation is to invite the reader to do something, this move can be considered as the core of the message. The writer usually specifies the person he/she invites in this move, which is normally ‘you’ (the reader). If the invitation is not directly for the reader, in most cases it is for the representative(s) of the reader’s company on whom the reader has an authority to decide. This move consists of at least one invitation message. Unlike a request sentence which can be subtle or indirect, an invitation message is explicit, direct and to the point. This is because the writer normally shows his/her attempt to invite the reader. In my corpus, this move includes two main types of invitation messages: (a) plain invitation, and (b) detailed invitation.

## ***1. Plain invitation***

The writer uses this type of message when he/she extends the invitation without any specific detail on date, time or venue of the event. For example,

‘We would like to invite you as our guest for this meeting.’ (NT27)

‘We would be honoured if you could join this function.’ (NT10)

‘It therefore gives us great pleasure to extend formal invitation to you for this exclusive event which will be followed by lunch.’ (TH35)

When the writer invites the reader to become a member of a society or organisation, the message is considered as plain invitation if the details are not included in the same sentence as the invitation message. For example,

‘On behalf of the membership of the Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, it is my pleasure to extend to you an invitation to join our organization.’ (TH34)

Sometimes the writer may include the reason why he/she invites the reader or the purpose/objective of the invitation in the message. For example,

‘Because of your prominence as an executive in THAILAND, we are pleased to invite you to join other international executives and become an International Associate of the Conference Board.’ (NT07)

‘We would like to reconfirm our invitation because your presence, dear Mr. Viravat, would give us the opportunity to discuss topics which might be of mutual interest.’ (NT18)

‘On behalf of the HPC Research Management Team and the other members of the Research Forum, I would like to invite you to attend the next Research Forum which will be reviewing the Laundry Research programme.’ (NT24)

It should be noted that most plain invitations are short and precise because the details of the event are presented in preceding or following sentences or paragraphs, or sometimes in attached documents.



## 2. *Detailed invitation*

The type of message involves both Move 1, *Inviting*, and Move 3, *Detailing*, as it contains information on date, time and/or venue of the event in the same sentence as the invitation. For example,

‘On behalf of the Economist Conferences, I am pleased to invite you to attend the First Roundtable with the Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic from April 23 to 25 1997 at the Lane Xang Hotel in Vientiane.’ (NT02)

‘We would be delighted if you would be able to join us at a small luncheon at the Heritage Club –“Governor’s Room” on March 10 at 12.00.’ (NT06)

‘We take pleasure in extending our invitation to you for a trade visit and discussion to Thailand during February 19-23, 1999.’ (TH22)

‘We, Polytechnology Co.,Ltd in collaboration with Fisher-Rosemount Singapore Plc.,Ltd would like to invite you to attend ‘A One Day Seminar on Fisher-Rosemount Flow Roadshow’ which will be held on Tuesday 12 January 1999 at 08.30am – 17.00pm (*sic.*) at Radisson Hotel.’ (TH38)

We can see that the main information of the event is presented in the detailed invitation messages above, which represent both Move 1 and Move 3. In addition, the writer sometimes elaborates such information in different sentences or paragraphs, which are regarded as Move 3, *Detailing*.

Plain invitations are considered as Move 1, *Inviting*, while detailed invitations are perceived as Move 1 and Move 3. It is interesting that the TH letters tend to use more detailed invitations (67%) than plain invitations (33%). On the other hand, 60% of the NT letters use plain invitations, and the rest 40% use detailed invitations.

As for the orientations, we can see from the examples above that the writers use both we- and you-orientations in a similar proportion, except for NT07 and NT18 (under ‘plain invitations’) in which the you-orientation tends to be predominant. The main mood type found in this move is declarative. As this move is the core of the invitation

letter, the linguistic realisation of the invitation messages written by the TH and NT writers will be discussed in detail in 6.4.2. Now we will move on to Move 2, *Establishing the context*.

### **6.3.2 Move 2 Establishing the Context**

In a letter of request, the writer frequently makes an introduction which is related to the invitation. I propose to call it ‘Establishing the context’. The writer uses this move as an introduction to the business in order to pave the way for the invitation. In my data, this move can be divided into three types: (a) giving background information, (b) raising the issue, and (c) stating purpose.

#### ***1. Giving background information***

To establish the context, the writer may begin by giving background of the business which is related to the consecutive invitation. For example,

‘Harrow has a long and very close relationship with Thai Royal Family for 100 years as you see twenty four Thai Royal Princes including Royal Price Mahidol, father of His Majesty the King, graduated from Harrow.’ (TH04-MB)

‘As you may know, The Conference Board is the premier global network for senior business executives. Companies associated with the Board range from large multinationals to smaller, more entrepreneurial ventures. Executives benefit specifically from exchanging information and experiences with peers from around the world.’ (NT07-MB)

‘In less than two years, the new European currency – the euro – will be introduced. This event will lead to a fundamental change in the international world of finance and investment, and have far reaching consequences for institutions and companies in Asia.’ (NT09-C)

‘Each year The Boston Consulting Group holds a series of Chief Executive conferences focusing on the utility industry sector.’ (NT17-C)



‘As I am sure many of you are aware, this year marks the one hundreth (*sic.*) anniversary of the first visit of His Majesty King Rama V to Europe. This momentous trip, which had such an impact on both Thai foreign relations and domestic policies, is one that we at The Siam Society recognized as an event to not only celebrate, but to look at closely for all its ramifications.’ (TH20-S)

‘Thailand is one of the major tropical fruit producing countries and is exporting fresh and preserved fruits in which the quantities and varieties are increasing steadily.’ (TH33-R)

In *giving background information*, the writer extensively uses the topic-orientation as we can see from the examples above. The we-/you-orientations are infrequently found, as in NT07 (*As you may know...*), and TH20 (*As I am sure many of you are aware...*) above. To sum up, giving background information is used to create a link to the upcoming invitation in following paragraph(s) of the letter. In my data, it is the most widely used type of statement under Move 2, *Establishing the context*.

## 2. *Raising the issue*

The writer can also begin the letter by *raising the issue*. This is somewhat different from *giving background information* in that *raising the issue* tends to create an obvious link between the writer or the writer’s company and the reader. Here the writer tries to raise the issue involving the reader before moving on to the invitation. In my data, the writer either makes some simple reference or elaborates the frame of reference by stressing the importance of the event. For example,

### [Simple Reference]

‘We sent a (*sic.*) honorary invitation to you in July and hope that you have received it in time.’ (NT18-C)

‘Congratulations! You have successfully passed our Unilever Business Week selection process.’ (TH21-M)

### [Elaborate Frame of Reference]

‘The introduction of a single Eurocurrency will have wide ranging significance to financial institutions around the globe, as they seek to

develop hedging and other strategies in this new market environment. We have asked Robin to provide a brief overview of some of the key issues and developments to a selected group of leading Thai bankers.’ (NT06-R)

‘The previous three conferences were very successful. Almost all those who were able to attend (see attached lists from 1996 and 1997) have suggested that we hold a similar conference in 1998 and have expressed their intention to attend, provided their schedules allow.’ (NT17-C)

‘Multimedia solutions and convergence of voice and data is the buzz word of the telecommunications industry now. Can you imagine talking to a live agent on the Internet and being escorted on the website enabling both parties to view the same web page? We at Lucent Technologies are proud to present you a suite of converged enterprise network solutions. What differentiates our solution from others?’ (NT40-S)

The two examples under ‘simple reference’ are quite similar to *giving background information*, but they are categorised here as *raising the issue* because they are more personal and do not involve the background of the business (i.e. no detailed information on the writer’s company). The writer simply raises the issue directly to the reader. In ‘elaborate frame of reference’, the writer tends to capture the reader’s interests by highlighting the expertise and/or achievements of the company (see NT17-C & NT40-S above). This characteristic can be compared to Bhatia’s Move 1, *Establishing credentials*. (see 4.4.1)

Due to the fact that the writer tries to create a link between the writer or the writer’s company and the reader, it is noticeable that he/she uses both we- and you-orientations. The last example (NT40-S) also uses the question form to raise the issue to the reader. Interestingly NT17-C makes an elaborate frame of reference to the company’s success in holding conferences in the past. Compared to its previous paragraph ‘*Each year The Boston Consulting Group holds a series of Chief Executive conferences focusing on the utility industry sector.*’, which is categorised as ‘giving background information’, the paragraph presented above is different, and thus, is categorised as ‘raising the issue’.



### 3. *Stating purpose*

In establishing the context, the writer may state the purpose of the event to which the reader is subsequently invited. The examples are as follows:

‘The purpose of the HPC Research Forum is to ensure that we use the best and most appropriate science to optimise delivery from the HPC Category Research programme.’ (NT24-C)

‘The purpose of this workshop is fourfold:

- to inform key decision makers in the Privatisation process of the changes which are inevitable.
- to adopt international best practice to manage the changes.
- to show how it is possible to capitalise on the changes.
- Having survived the transition to show how the business can grow and develop into a global entity.’ (NT28-S)

‘The aim of the Asian Business Breakfast Club is to form a non-political forum for successful Asian entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom to enable them to get together in congenial surroundings and discuss matters of common interest with Government and Shadow Ministers and captains of mainstream business.’ (NT30-M)

‘The objectives of organising this reception are to promote and encourage Thai fruits to the UK market.’ (TH33-R)

In *stating purpose*, the only orientation found is the topic-orientation. The keywords for this type of statement are, for example, ‘purpose(s)’, ‘aim(s)’, and ‘objective(s)’.

In conclusion, Move 2, *Establishing the context*, consists of (1) giving background information, (2) raising the issue, and/or (3) stating purpose. Each can appear on its own or with one another. The NT letters tend to combine those three aspects together while the TH letters prefer to use one at a time. This move is found in 19 NT letters (76%) and 9 TH letters (60%) as a whole.

### 6.3.3 Move 3 Detailing

In this move, the writer informs the reader of the details concerning the invitation. It can be brief or very informative depending on the context. This move typically involves a date/time/venue, which is often included in the invitation messages (Move 2, *Inviting*), as discussed in 6.3.1. In the invitations to conferences (C), seminars (S) and meetings (M), this move normally includes four main issues:

#### 1. *Structure of the event*

This involves the general description of the types of conferences/seminars/meetings including the topic(s) and/or other feature(s) that the writer wants the reader to know. For example,

‘The discussion will be held both in Thai and in English.’ (TH37)

‘During this half day seminar we will share with you leading edge technology and applications that businesses implement to enhance their competitive advantage and operation efficiency.’ (NT40)

#### 2. *Main speaker(s)*

The writer sometimes mentions the name(s) of the main or keynote speaker(s) in the conferences/seminars/meetings. This type of detail can attract the reader especially when the speaker(s) are famous or in the same business as the reader. The examples are as follows:

‘Speakers include Mrs. Naya Vechinsri, Assistant Governor of the Bank of Thailand and Mr. Gerben Kuyper, Senior Executive Vice President of ABN AMRO Bank.’ (NT09)

‘We are delighted to announce that the Hon. Viktor Orban, newly elected Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, will open the FORUM as guest speaker on Wednesday, September 23.’ (NT12)



### 3. *Fee/Funding*

The writer may indicate the registration fee(s) as part of the details. For example, ‘*Pre-registration for the seminar is B1,200, and will take place through December 12, after which registration will be B1,500.*’ (TH20) If there is no registration fee, the writer usually makes it clear that the event is free or that the writer’s company will sponsor or cover any cost incurred. For example,

‘This seminar is free of charge.’ (TH39)

‘Andersen Consulting offers to fund all your expenses which include round-trip airfare (First Class), hotel accommodation, meals and transportation during the conference period.’ (TH16)

### 4. *Evaluation and/or indication of the benefit(s)*

This is quite similar to, though not as cogent as Move 2(iii), *Indicating value of the product or service*, in the analysis of sales promotion letters. (see 4.4.2) Here the writer highlights the benefits that the reader will gain if he/she accepts the invitation, and participates in the conferences/seminars/meetings. Some examples may indirectly repeat the purposes of invitation, but the main focus is to highlight the benefits. For example,

‘Interactive workshop sessions will enable you to probe specific operating and investment issues in greater detail. At the end of this two-and-a-half day dialogue, you will come away from the Roundtable with an indepth knowledge of the opportunities and challenges of operating in Laos, a greater sense of the likely future direction of the business environment and have met with the top business and political leadership of the country.’ (NT02)

‘The Forum will provide an excellent opportunity to assess progress and identify priorities for future action in developing the financial sectors of Asian economies.’ (NT05)

‘FORTUNE is putting every resource behind this undertaking to ensure that all participants come away with fresh insights and useful information for managing in the global marketplace. The entire event will be executed at the highest level of quality and service, suitable for a group of this importance.’ (NT11)

‘The New Economy is about knowledge and ideas, and we believe your company will benefit from this exchange of knowledge and ideas with our experts.’ (TH35)

‘As this seminar conducted by specialist from Fisher Rosemount Singapore which is not very often held, so, we would like you to take this opportunity to attend it for your benefit and knowledge.’ (TH38)

As for the invitations to trade visits (V), the writer uses the above-mentioned except (2) *Main speaker(s)*. The emphasis tends to be on the structure of the visit, for example,

‘Your visit will allow you to see our project which is already complete.’ (NT03)

‘We hope to provide you with a better understanding of our operations and seek to further strengthen our business relationship and cooperation.’ (TH22)

‘The proposed program would include visits to Australian coal-fired power stations, mines, coal research centres, peak industry bodies and a possible meeting with Senator Parer, Minister for Resources and Energy.’ (NT19)

In the invitations to receptions (R) in my corpus, the writer focuses on the general details of the function(s). Unlike the invitations to conferences/seminars/meetings, business receptions do not contain explicit evaluation/indication of the benefits to the reader, and rarely incur any charge or fee. The examples are as follows:

‘To mark this historic occasion, the Chairman of the Colonial Board, Mr. David Adam, will be hosting a cocktail function at the Oriental Hotel commencing around 6:00 p.m.’ (NT10)

‘During the reception, Thai fruits will be presented and discussed by our expert. On display, there will be the beautiful and magnificent Thai Orchid arrangements and fruit carving will be demonstrated.’ (TH33)

The invitations to take a membership in a society/organisation (MB) involves general details of the membership, for example,

‘Your membership includes participation in our Councils – exclusive networking groups of executives worldwide.’ (NT07)



This type of invitations also focuses strongly on the evaluation/indication of the benefits to the reader in order to persuade him/her to join in as a member. The following examples will illustrate this point:

‘Perhaps, though, the greatest value you will receive from membership in the Conference Board is being part of a global network. You will have the opportunity to develop personal contacts, and through them gain the insights that can help your company excel.’ (NT07)

‘As a member, you can learn ancient history firsthand when you attend seminars given by noted experts, whether in our lecture hall, or outdoors at an historical site on one of our famous study trips.’ (TH34)

To sum up, the presentations of Move 3 in different types of invitation can vary slightly. However, their main aim is the same, that is, to inform the reader of the event to which he or she is invited. This type of information is indispensable for the invitation; Move 3, *Detailing*, is, therefore, obligatory in the letters of invitation.

#### **6.3.4 Move 4 Soliciting Response**

This move is similar to Bhatia’s (1993) Move 5, *Soliciting response*. (see 4.4.5) Like sales promotion letters, letters of invitation aim to solicit response from the reader. Soliciting response in sales promotion letters is for boosting sales by initiating new business relations or strengthening the existing ones whereas that in letters of invitation is for conducting necessary business routines or procedures concerning the invitation. The writer needs to know whether the reader will accept or decline the invitation so that appropriate preparations will be proceeded. Although replying to an invitation is a social-business etiquette which people should do without being told, many invitation letters tend to include a request for the reader to reply. This is considered here as Move 4, *Soliciting response*.

In this move, the writer normally asks the reader to respond to the invitation, and gives the name of the contact person and/or a specific telephone or fax number or an email address to encourage response. Sometimes the writer also encloses a registration or reply form with the letter, and asks the reader to return it to the writer's company. For example,

‘Please complete the attached registration form and fax to ...’ (NT40)

‘Enclosed for your review is a complete description of member benefits, as well as your Membership Invitation. Please let us know soon if you are accepting or declining this invitation.’ (NT07)

If the reader is required to reply by a specific date, the writer always indicate it in this move. For example,

‘Kindly reply by faxing the enclosed registration form to ... by Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1997.’ (NT09)

‘RSVP by the attached form to our office by 19<sup>th</sup> June 2000 on fax no. ...’ (TH33)

‘Kindly confirm your participation by return (*sic.*) the enclosed Confirmation Sheet to our fax No. ... within March 15, 2000.’ (TH39)

When there is a limitation to the invitation such as a limited number of seats in a conference, the writer often informs the reader to encourage prompt reply. For example,

‘Due to the small number of guests we are inviting, we would be grateful if you could be so kind as to respond at your earliest convenience by fax on ..., or to my attention at the address set forth above.’ (NT08)

‘As only a few spots remain, please return the enclosed registration form by June 8.’ (NT11)

From my data, the most common linguistic realisation of this move is the use of the imperative mood type with the politeness marker ‘please’. The declarative mood type is occasionally found. It can be in the form of ‘If-clause’ as in NT08 above, or in a plain declarative clause with the verbal phrase ‘look forward to...’, for example, ‘*I look forward to your reply.*’ (NT28) and ‘*In the meantime, my warmest good wishes and I look forward to hearing from you.*’ (NT29)



There is another interesting way of soliciting response. In some infrequent cases, the writer prefers to follow up with the reader about his/her response to the invitation. The writer may inform the reader in this move. For example,

‘My staff will follow up with your office to determine your availability.’ (NT01)

‘I will confirm with your secretary.’ (TH04)

‘Khun Malee (ext. 2724) will call your secretary shortly to confirm your participation in this meeting.’ (TH13)

The mood type in the above examples is declarative. It should be noted that 28 out of 40 letters contain Move 4, *Soliciting response*. They consist of 17 NT letters (68%) and 11 TH letters (73%). In conclusion, the linguistic realisation of this move is through the use of imperative with the politeness marker ‘please’, the use of plain declarative and declarative in the form of ‘If-clause’. The writer might enclose a registration or reply form and often includes the contact person’s name, address/email address, and telephone/fax numbers. If there is a limitation or a deadline, the writer always states in this move. Although it is optional, this move is found in 70% of the letters (28 out of 40).

### **6.3.5 Move 5 Anticipating acceptance**

The writer often expresses in the invitation letter that he/she is anticipating acceptance from the reader. This move is somewhat similar to the function of ‘anticipation’ in the post-request analysis of the letters of request. (see 5.6) However, instead of anticipating the reader’s help or compliance with the request, here the writer expects the reader to accept the invitation, and thus tries to convey this ‘anticipation’ message to the reader. The statements concerning anticipating acceptance are generally of the declarative mood type. The writer expresses his/her wish that the reader will join the writer or the writer’s company in the event the reader is invited to, such as a business meeting, reception or conference. For example, ‘*I hope you will be able to join us in*

*Vientiane in April to ensure that your company – and your views – are part of this important forum for discussion.’* (NT02)

From my data, the linguistic realisation of this move involves an extensive use of the verb ‘hope’ and the verbal phrase ‘look forward to’. Regarding the verb ‘hope’, the writer uses 2 patterns: (1) ‘I/We + (really/very much) hope + to + verb+you(r)’, and (2) ‘I/We + (really/very much) hope + (that) + clause’. The examples are as follows:

#### Pattern 1

‘I very much hope to see you in Seoul this coming September.’ (NT08)

‘I hope to see you there.’ (NT10)

‘My FORTUNE colleagues and I hope to see you in Budapest this September.’ (NT11)

‘We very much hope to see you at our sessions in 1999.’ (NT31)

‘We hope to receive your kind support.’ (TH36)

#### Pattern 2

‘I hope I will have the pleasure of welcoming you to Seattle.’ (NT01)

‘We hope you will decide to join us.’ (NT07)

‘We really hope that you are able to join us in October.’ (NT17)

‘I feel that these planned events will be of particular interest to Siam Society members and I very much hope you will have to opportunity to attend.’ (TH20)

The verbal phrase ‘look forward to’ is used in the pattern of ‘Looking forward to’ or to a greater extent, ‘I/We + (very much) + look forward to + the ‘-ing’ form of verb or a noun or noun phrase’. For example,

‘We look forward to you joining us in May for this important event.’ (NT05)

‘We look forward to welcoming you to this conference.’ (NT09)

‘I very much look forward to the opportunity of seeing you again at the Club on 12<sup>th</sup> October.’ (TH13)

‘We look forward to meeting you on Saturday, July 29, 2000.’ (TH35)

‘We look forward to your warm participation.’ (NT40)



On the surface, the anticipation statements with the verbal phrase ‘look forward to’ here might look similar to those in Move 4, *Soliciting response*. However, the distinction is that the statements in this move clearly express the positive anticipation of the reader’s acceptance, not just their reply (as in Move 4, e.g. ‘*I look forward to your reply*’ or ‘*I look forward to hearing from you*’). Here the writer often assumes that the reader will accept the invitation, as in ‘*We look forward to meeting you on Saturday, July 29, 2000.*’ (TH35) The writer sometimes makes a strategic statement by adding the adjective of appraisal, for example, ‘*I look forward to your favourable reply.*’ (NT32) The adjective ‘favourable’ makes this statement fall into the category of ‘anticipating acceptance’. A similar case is found in a different type of statement: ‘*We would be delighted by your positive response and hope to see you in Strasbourg.*’ (NT18) Here the writer uses some appreciative strategies through the term ‘would be delighted’ and expresses his/her anticipation of the reader’s acceptance through the appraisal adjective ‘positive’ in ‘your positive response’ and through the verb ‘hope to see you’.

In my corpus, the writer tends to equally use the verb ‘hope’ and the verbal phrase ‘look forward to’. Both we- and you-orientations are extensively found. This move is used in 85% of the letters of invitation. It is found in 22 NT letters (88%), and 12 TH letters (80%). Many letters contain both Move 4, *Soliciting response*, and Move 5, *Anticipating acceptance*. As stated earlier, if Move 4 is missing, then Move 5 appears instead, or vice versa. It is interesting that the writer usually includes positive or optimistic remarks of the reader’s acceptance in the letters of invitation.

### 6.3.6 Move 6 Expressing thanks

The writer may express his/her thankfulness or gratitude to the reader. This is similar to Bhatia’s Move 7, *Ending politely*, found in sales promotion letters. (see 4.4.7) It should be noted that only 2 out of 40 letters of invitation in my corpus contain this

move. We can see in previous chapters that sales promotion letters and letters of request extensively use expressions of thanks. The letters of invitation are different presumably because the writer may not feel that he/she is indebted to the reader as the writer aims to invite the reader, not to request any favour from the reader. The two letters that use this move are both written by Thai speakers. Their expressions of thanks are formulaic, and are preceded by Move 4, *Soliciting Response*. One is a plain expression of thanks: ‘*Thank you.*’ (TH38), and the other is considered as elaborated thanks: ‘*Thank you in advance for your kind assistance.*’ (TH38) It seems that the writer wants to thank the reader for his/her future response to the invitation. This move is very infrequently found in the letters of invitation, and is regarded as optional.

So far I have covered the move analysis of the letters of invitation. The structural description of all six moves is aimed at providing better understanding of the general structure of the invitation letters. Although Zhu (2001) identifies eight moves in her analysis as outlined in Chapter 2 on page 53, I did not follow her move structure because it is designed for the letters of invitation to trade fairs only. Some similarities can be found in her moves concerning *introducing* (similar to *Establishing the context*), *inviting*, and *encouraging further contact* (similar to *Soliciting response* and *Anticipating acceptance*). Zhu (2001) found an extra move called ‘Move 5 *inviting again*’ (often occurred towards the end) in 8 out of 20 Chinese letters in her corpus, which makes them different from her English letters. In my corpus, neither NT nor TH letter has such move. The next section presents the analysis of the invitation messages.

## 6.4 Analysis of the Invitation Messages

In this section, we will examine the invitation messages which are the core of the letters of invitation. The focus is on their positions and linguistic realisation



especially in relation to each type of invitation. Most letters contain multi-paragraph texts. There are only four letters with two paragraphs and only one letter with one paragraph. This is a small number when compared to 22 letters of request which have one or two paragraphs. Therefore, it is not worth dividing them into single/two-paragraph and multi-paragraph texts. While the length of the letters of request relatively influences the distribution and positions of requests, the length of the invitation letters in my corpus does not have such effect. Many NT and TH invitation letters with four to six paragraphs start the invitation messages early in the first or second paragraphs.

### 6.4.1 Positions of the Invitation Messages

It is interesting that the distribution of invitation message(s) in all 40 letters is within one paragraph. It should be noted that each letter has only one invitation message which is either in the form of a short, simple sentence or a long, complex sentence. So there are 40 invitation messages in total. Their positions are displayed in the following table:

**Table 6.5: Positions of the invitation message(s)**

Positions of the invitation message(s)	NT <i>N</i> = 25	TH <i>N</i> = 15	Total <i>N</i> = 40
1 <sup>st</sup> Paragraph	12 (48%)	8 (53%)	20 (50%)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Paragraph	5 (20%)	5 (33%)	10 (25%)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Paragraph	5 (20%)	1 (7%)	6 (15%)
4 <sup>th</sup> Paragraph	3 (12%)	1 (7%)	4 (10%)

It is obvious that both NT and TH writers tend to start the invitation messages in the first paragraph. (20 out of 40 letters) In fact, among these 20 letters, 16 letters use the invitation messages as an opening sentence which appears right at the beginning of the body of the letters. The other four relegate their invitation messages to the second sentence in the first paragraph, after Move 2, *Establishing the context*. Those sixteen letters whose invitation messages are in the initial position of the first paragraph

consist of 9 NT and 7 TH letters. This is worth mentioning here because it is noticeable that the TH writers do not adopt what Hinds (1990) calls a '*delayed introduction of purpose*' or '*quasi-inductive*' style of writing in this type of persuasive letter as they do in the letters of request. (see 5.2.2)

## 6.4.2 Linguistic Realisation of the Invitation Messages

In 6.3.1, I discussed the content of Move 1, *Inviting*. The forty invitation messages belong to this move. It is interesting to see how the invitation messages are realised in terms of their textual and linguistic features. Regardless of their positions, I will examine the linguistic realisation of all invitation messages. First of all, it is useful to divide them into 4 groups. The first group consists of the invitations to conferences (C), seminars (S), and meetings (M). These three types of invitation can be grouped together for this analysis because they share similar characteristics. The second group is the invitations to receptions (R). The third group is the invitations to trade-related visits (V). And the last group is the invitations to take a membership in a society/organisation (MB).

### 6.4.2.1 *Invitations to conferences (C), seminars (S), and meeting (M)*

There are 27 invitation messages of this type (18 NT, 9TH). The most common linguistic feature used is the verb 'to invite', which is mainly found in the form of 'I/We + would like + to invite + you + to attend...', for example,

'We, Polytechnology Co.,Ltd in collaboration with Fisher-Rosemount Singapore Plc.,Ltd would like to invite you to attend 'A One Day Seminar on Fisher-Rosemount Flow Roadshow' which will be held on ...' (TH38)

'On behalf of the HPC Research Management Team and the other members of the Research Forum, I would like to invite you to attend the next Research Forum which will be reviewing the Laundry Research programme.' (NT24)



The term ‘on behalf of’ is occasionally used in the invitation messages, and always appears at the beginning of the sentence. Sometimes the writer may use the term ‘I am pleased/delighted + to invite...’, for example,

‘On behalf of the Economist Conferences, I am pleased to invite you to attend the First Roundtable with the Government ...’ (NT02)

‘Following the success of AsiaConnects in Kuala Lumpur and EuroConnects, our established annual event in Europe, I am delighted to invite a representative of Airports Authority of Thailand to AsiaConnects 2000.’ (NT23)

Another term is ‘to extend this/our invitation’ which is found in different styles as follows:

‘On behalf of Deputy Prime Minister Kang Kyong Shik of the Republic of Korea and Mr. Richard McClean, Publisher and Chief Executive of the International Herald Tribune, I take great pleasure in extending this complimentary invitation for you to attend the 1997 Korea Summit.’ (NT08)

‘It therefore gives us great pleasure to extend formal invitation to you for this exclusive event which will be followed by lunch.’ (TH35)

‘On behalf of the TVA, I would like to extend our invitation to you or your representative to attend the above which will be held on ...’ (TH37)

We can see that the verb ‘to attend’ is also used extensively. There is one NT example which uses a ‘self-obligation’ statement in the form of ‘If-clause’: *We would appreciate it if you are able to attend the ASEAN-UK Business Forum’s meeting scheduled for tomorrow – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> at 9.30a, at the Philippines Embassy.* (NT26)

The terms ‘pleasure’ and ‘opportunity’ are occasionally found, as in the following examples:

‘It is my pleasure to invite you to the next meeting of the Board of Advisors and Governors ...’ (TH13)

‘We would like to take this opportunity to invite and propose to your goodself our sponsorship scheme.’ (TH14)

As discussed earlier in 6.3.1, the invitation messages can be of two types: plain invitations and detailed invitations (in which date, time and/or venue of the event are included). There are 11 detailed invitations here (6NT, 5TH), which accounts for 41%. Almost every letter uses the declarative mood type. There is only one NT letter which uses the imperative mood type:

‘Please join me as my guest May 7-9, 1997, when The Microsoft CEO Summit convenes in Seattle.’ (NT01)

There does not appear to be a clear-cut distinction in the use the we- and you-orientations between the NT and TH invitations. However, there are a few exceptional cases in which the writer attempts to put an emphasis on ‘you’ the reader. It is realised through a passive voice where ‘you’ is the subject. For example,

‘You are cordially invited to attend this conference on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 1997 at the Ballroom of the Regent Hotel, 155 Rajdamri Road, Bangkok 10330.’ (NT09)

‘You are cordially invited to join us for what promises to be an extraordinary event.’ (NT11)

‘You are invited to attend:

Converged Networks – Unifying Your Enterprise Business Strategy,  
Tuesday, April 11, 2000

The Ballroom, The Regent Bangkok Hotel

8:30-12:00am’ (NT40)

In the above examples, ‘you’ is clearly emphasized in the form of ‘you are (cordially) invited to...’. It is noticeable that only NT letters use this type of passive voice in the invitation message. The TH writer only uses active voice. To sum up, apart from the passive voice and imperative mood type, there is no other particular difference between the NT and TH invitations in this category.



#### 6.4.2.2 *Invitations to receptions (R)*

There are 5 invitations to receptions in my corpus (4 NT, 1 TH). Apart from the verb ‘to invite’, another common linguistic feature is the verb ‘to join’ and the indication of the type of reception. For example,

‘We would be delighted if you would be able to join us at a small luncheon at the Heritage Club ...’ (NT06)

‘We would be honoured if you could join this function (official invitation is enclosed).’ (NT10)

Both NT examples above use the ‘self-obligation’ statements (i.e. we would be delighted/honoured if...). The only TH example in this category is as follows:

‘The Office of Commercial Affairs, Royal Thai Embassy have the great pleasure to invite you to the Reception of “Exotic Thai Fruits” on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2000 from 5.30-8.00pm at Royal Lancaster Hotel, Lancaster Terrace, London W2 2TY.’ (TH33)

The term ‘opportunity’ is also used in one NT example: ‘I would like to have the opportunity to invite you for lunch and also to update you on the products/sales/research capabilities of DMG across Global Markets products and identify business opportunities.’ (NT32) As there are only a few examples, it is impossible to point out any difference between the NT and TH invitations to receptions.

#### 6.4.2.3 *Invitations to trade-related visits (V)*

The common linguistic features of this type of invitations are the verbs ‘to invite’ and ‘to visit’. There are 5 examples: 2 NT, 3 TH. Most invitations in this category use the term ‘to invite + you + to visit’, for example,

‘During that trip, I would like to invite you to visit me at EGAT to renew our relationship and to discuss matters of our mutual interest.’ (TH15)

‘Further to our telephone conversation earlier today, I am writing to formally invite you to visit Australia as a guest of the Australian Government ...’ (NT19)

Another way of inviting includes the terms ‘pleasure’ and ‘to extend our invitation’ as in the following example:

‘We take pleasure in extending our invitation to you for a trade visit and discussion to Thailand ...’ (TH22)

Again, due to a limited number of examples, it cannot be assumed that there is any difference between the NT and TH invitations to trade-related visits.

#### ***6.4.2.4 Invitations to take a membership in a society/organisation (MB)***

There are only 3 invitations of this type in my corpus (1 NT, 2 TH). Like some other types, the verbs ‘to invite’ and ‘to join’ are prominent. For example,

‘Mom Rajawongse Chaftu Mongol Sonakul asked me to see and invite you as a founder and shareholder of the best British Public School, i.e. Harrow School implanted in Thailand.’ (TH04)

‘Because of your prominence as an executive in THAILAND, we are pleased to invite you to join other international executives and become an International Associate of the Conference Board.’ (NT07)

‘On behalf of the membership of the Siam Society Under Royal Patronage, it is my pleasure to extend to you an invitation to join our organization.’ (TH34)

The first two examples have a strong focus on ‘you’ the reader. The last example is a TH invitation with the terms ‘on behalf of’ and ‘to extend an invitation’ which is similar to some examples in Type C-invitation. As there are very few examples, we cannot compare between the TH and NT invitations of this type.

In conclusion, the invitation messages are mainly realised by the common use of the verbs ‘to invite’, ‘to attend’, ‘to join’ which can be presented in different forms of sentence. The NT invitations have a more variety of presentations. It includes the imperative mood and passive voice in the first type (Conference and Seminar), and also the self-obligation statements in the first and second types (Meeting and Reception respectively). Interestingly, no TH invitations use the self-obligation statement at all. The TH writers only use active voice in the declarative mood type,



and tend to use more detailed invitations than plain invitations whereas the NT writers prefer plain invitations as mentioned earlier in the previous section. However, the lexical choices are somewhat similar between the NT and TH invitation messages.

## 6.5 Interesting Features of the Letters of Invitation

In addition to the linguistic features, there are some interesting structural features of the letters of invitation. They consist of the use of headings, enclosures, statements of limitation, and multiple statements of ‘soliciting response’.

### 6.5.1 The Use of Headings

There are two types of headings in the letters of invitation. They both summarise the content of the letter. The first one is a single heading which appears without a prefix, for example, **ASIAN BUSINESS BREAKFAST CLUB – WEDNESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1999** (NT30), **VISIT TO BANK OF THAILAND** (NT32). This type of heading is often written in capital letters in bold, and is usually underlined. There are 9 headings of this type (8 NT, 1 TH). The second type is a heading which is preceded by the terms ‘Re:’ (abbreviated from ‘Regarding’) or ‘Subject:’, for example, ‘RE: INVITATION TO ATTEND A PANEL DISCUSSION ON REAL ESTATE VALUATIONS IN THE DECLINING MARKET’ (TH37), ‘*Subject: Invitation to attend FR Flow Roadshow Seminar*’ (TH38). There are 7 headings of this type (3 NT, 4 TH). The types of invitations that often use headings (with or without a prefix) are Type C-Conference (6), Type M-Meeting (3), and Type S-Seminar (3). These headings are also considered as Move 1, *Inviting*, and/or Move 3, *Detailing*. In total there are 16 letters with headings (11 NT, 5 TH), which accounts for 40% of the corpus.

### 6.5.2 The use of Enclosures

Many letters of invitation have enclosures which can be in the form of a brochure/leaflet of the event, reply card and/or registration form. In addition to the details written in the body of the letter (Move 3, *Detailing*), the writer often attaches some documents concerning the invitation. There are 27 letters with enclosures (17 NT, 10 TH), which accounts for 67.50%. The types of invitation with frequent use of enclosures include Type S-Seminar, Type C-Conference, Type MB-Membership and Type R-Reception. Every letter in Type S-Seminar (6) has enclosure(s) whereas 11 out of 14 Type C-Conference, 2 out of 3 Type MB-Membership, and 3 out of 5 Type R-Reception invitations have enclosures. It is found in a lesser extent in Type M-Meeting (3 out of 7) and Type V-Trade Visit (2 out of 5). These letters with enclosures indicate the reader about the attached documents in the body of the letter and/or at the end of the letter using the abbreviations 'enc.' or 'encls.'.

### 6.5.3 The use of Statements of Limitation

I have mentioned this earlier in Move 4, *Soliciting response*. The writer includes this type of statement in Move 4 when the reader is required to reply by a specific date mostly due to a limited space or attendance. In sales promotion letters, Bhatia (1993) regards it as a separate move called 'Using pressure tactics' in which the writer uses expressions of urgency and deadlines to push the reader to make an immediate decision to buy the product/service. (see 4.4.6) However, in the letters of invitation in my corpus, the context is different as it is not sales-related. The writer uses statements of limitation in order to solicit a response concerning acceptance or refusal of the invitation from the reader as early as possible or within a specific date. These statements are mostly integrated in the request sentences that ask for the reader's reply. Therefore, I consider them as part of Move 4, *Soliciting response*. For example,



‘Due to the small number of guests we are inviting, we would be grateful if you could be so kind as to respond at your earliest convenience by fax on...’ (NT08)

‘Attendance is limited, so kindly return the enclosed RSVP by *Monday, December 30, 1996*.’ (NT01)

In my data, the NT writer tends to use this strategy more than the TH writer. The statement of limitation is found in 13 NT letters (52%) and 4 TH letters (27%). It is used most extensively in Type C-Conference invitations (which are mainly NT).

#### 6.5.4 The use of multiple statements of ‘soliciting response’

The linguistic realisation of Move 4, *Soliciting response*, has been discussed in 6.3.4. This move involves a request for the reader to reply. It is found in 70% of the letters. The use of multiple statements here tends to combine a ‘soliciting response’ move with an ‘offer’ or ‘facilitating’ move. The former can be referred to Bhatia’s (1993) Move 5 in his sales promotion analysis while the latter reflects the ‘offer’ function in post-requests. (see 5.6) Examples are as follows:

‘As only a few spots remain, please return the enclosed registration form by June 8. Do not hesitate to call should you have any questions.’ (NT11)

‘Hotel space is limited, so it is especially important to respond by the above date to be assured a room at the Hotel Arts. If you have any questions, please give me a call at ...’ (TH16)

‘Please confirm your participation the soonest by calling... (Next paragraph) Please do not hesitate to contact me or team members above if you have any inquires (*sic.*) or assistance (*sic.*).’ (TH21)

‘Furthermore, please do (*sic.*) hesitate to contact us if you need more information or have any query. We look forward to hearing you (*sic.*) soon.’ (TH36)

‘Kindly confirm your participation by return the enclosed Confirmation Sheet to our fax No. ... within March 15, 2000. If more information is required, please contact Khun Haruethai N. at ...’ (TH39)

The letters with multiple statements of ‘soliciting response’ consist of 9 letters (3 NT, 6 TH). The writer invites the reader to contact his/her company if the reader needs more information or has any questions about the invitation. The TH letters use this

type of multiple statement more than the NT letters. The types of invitation include 3 Type C-Conference, 3 Type S-Seminar, 1 Type M-Meeting, 1 Type V-Trade Visit, and 1 Type MB-Membership. Most of them (7 out of 9) also have the statement of anticipation of the reader's acceptance.

## 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter aims to study the rhetorical patterns of the letters of invitation and identify the relevant moves and their linguistic realisations. The six-move pattern is identified and applied to every letter. Both NT and TH letters appear to have similar moves except that Move 6, *Expressing thanks*, is found in only 2 TH letters. Unlike the letters of request in which the NT writers use fewer paragraphs than the TH writers, the majority of the NT letters of invitation have four to six paragraphs whereas that of the TH letters have three to five paragraphs. There is no obvious difference in terms of length as the average is four paragraphs. Interestingly, the TH writers do not adopt what Hinds (1990) calls the 'delayed introduction of purpose' style of writing in their invitation letters as they do in the letters of request. Many invitation messages (both NT and TH) are found in the first paragraph, mostly in the first sentence. Only 2 TH letters have the invitation messages in the third and fourth paragraphs respectively. The concept of the 'delayed introduction of purpose' is, therefore, not applicable in this type of persuasive correspondence.

The common linguistic feature used in invitation messages is the verb 'to invite', especially in the form of 'I/We + would like + to invite + you + to attend/join/visit...'. The mood type is mostly declarative. Self-obligation statements are not found in the TH invitation messages. The NT invitations sometimes use imperative mood and passive voice whereas the TH ones use only declarative mood and active voice, and tend to include more details of the invitations. The we- and you-orientations tend to be equally found in both NT and TH letters, and the topic-orientation is usually found



in Move 3, *Detailing*. In conclusion, local socio-cultural constraints do not seem to be striking in this study. Compared to the letters of sales promotion and request, the letters of invitation in my corpus reveal the least cross-cultural differences.

## CHAPTER 7

### CROSS-CULTURAL VARIATION: THAI VS. ENGLISH

When one culture comes into contact with another, communication difficulties are likely to occur especially if the communicators do not have background knowledge of their partners' cultural values. Kramsch (1993), in her research on context and culture in language teaching, states that culture is often regarded as mere information conveyed by language. She explains,

If, however, language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency. (ibid:8)

Culture and language seem to be inseparable as Saville-Troike (1982:23) points out, 'The systems of culture are pattern of symbols, and language is only one of the symbolic systems in this network. Interpreting the meaning of linguistic behaviour requires knowing the meaning in which it is embedded.' The Thai culture is always regarded as unique because Thailand has never been colonised; and, linguistically, the Thai language, with its own characteristics incomparable to other Asian languages, is the only official language in the kingdom. Intercultural communication in which English is the medium plays a significant role in business operations in the Thai business context nowadays. As we can see in previous chapters, some characteristics of the business letter writing of Thais are different from those of native English speakers. Cultural awareness should not be overlooked, as it is the key to developing better understanding of such cross-cultural variation. In this chapter, I will examine how the Thai business culture and letter writing patterns are reflected in persuasive correspondence in English. The cultural differences in politeness and rhetorical appeals found in the persuasive business letters in my corpus will be discussed in detail. The aim is to identify cross-cultural variation of written Thai-style persuasive



English in the business context in order to develop better cross-cultural understanding between Thai and western business professionals.

## **7.1 The Thai Workplace, Culture and Communication Behaviour**

A western businessman who is not accustomed to the Thai way of life can be easily bewildered when he walks into a typical Thai office and sees Buddha images on little shrines decorated with delicate flower garlands. Most Thai offices bear the white marks on the door or the wall of the main entrance as a sign of having been blessed by the Buddhist monks. Buddhism is often regarded as part of Thai people's lives, both personal and professional. Monarchy and Buddhism are two main institutions of the Thai society. Although Thailand is now ruled by an elected government led by a prime minister under a constitution, the present king, King Rama IX, remains the most important figure of the kingdom. The Thai society is considered hierarchical; social hierarchy is marked by a system of grading interpersonal factors such as age, social status, family or educational background and occupational position. In a Thai office, the furniture can also represent the status of the employee in the company. For example, the low-level office worker normally has a plain desk and a small chair in a corner either at the front entrance or at the far end of the room whereas the high-level employee has a bigger chair and desk in a better location, or sometimes has his/her own room. In their study of communicative competence in Thai companies, Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin (1999) point out,

For Thais, communicative competence was associated with knowing when, where and with whom to express respectful manner in the organization, knowledge of chain of command communication, knowing how to communicate with and honor senior organizational members and show respect for their experience. (ibid:409)

The hierarchical dimensions are distinctly reflected in the Thai language especially in the pronouns and terms of address, some of which will be discussed in relation to business salutations in the next chapter.

During the past few decades, the Thai government has been supporting a free trade economy which has attracted foreign investment especially from multinational companies. Thailand is now considered as a newly industrialised country. There are a large number of western subsidiaries operating especially in the capital city, Bangkok. Stage (1999) studies organisational communication cultures in U.S-Thai parent-subsidiary organisations doing business in Thailand. She conducted face-to-face interviews with 49 mid- to upper-level Thai managers who work with American expatriates in four organisations. Her interviews seek to understand how Thai employees participate in the creation of their organisational communication cultures. It should be noted that Stage's (1999) study focuses on organisational behaviour, not the use of English in cross-cultural business settings. However, her findings reveal some interesting socio-cultural differences which show how the Thai culture influences business conduct, for example, in terms of gift giving, workplace relationships and politeness.

Some interviewees criticize their companies in terms of their gift-giving policy. As part of business culture, Thai business people do give presents to their clients especially on special occasions such as New Year. The choice of presents depends on the business relationship or the importance of the clients. According to the interviews, some American expatriates ('expats') misinterpret this concept and think it is illegal. If they do give presents, they do not differentiate the choice of presents in accordance to the Thai business norms (i.e. social-business or relationship-related hierarchy). Thais view this situation as uncomfortable and embarrassing.



Regarding the workplace relationships, many interviewees say that they have difficulties in relationship building with the expatriates in their companies, as one of them states,

They (expats) need to adjust to the local way of doing business. They should go golfing or out for dinner and just get to know people, but they talk business all the time. They never take the chance to build a relationship. (Stage 1999:260)

The difference between Thai and American politeness is also revealed by one interviewee,

The Thais are gentle in how they hand documents to each other. The expats just toss or throw them; that's not good. The expats mean nothing by it, but the Thais would never do something like that. Also the head is high and the feet are low, so don't pat people on the head or put your feet on the desk. Thais stay calm and speak softly all the time. I can be assertive, but you learn how to do it without being aggressive. (ibid:265)

The perception of head and feet needs to be clarified here as it is somewhat unique to the Thai culture. Thais believe that the head is the most superior part of the body whereas the feet are considered the lowest part. (cf. Wierzbicka 1991:12) They do not touch someone's head especially those who are older or who have a higher social status. They may feel offended if someone pats them on their head, no matter what his/her intention is. Many Thais wear necklaces carrying small Buddha image(s). Buddha images are sacred to most Thai Buddhists, and are often put in high places (e.g. on the top shelf of a shrine). Therefore, when wearing a necklace with a Buddha image, a Thai may consider his/her head as sacred, and thus, it can be socially and culturally unacceptable to play with his/her head. Thais are also sensitive to the use of their feet. It is considered bad-mannered if someone puts his/her feet on the desk or point at something with his/her feet. Therefore, some Thais can feel offended in the office where western expats are unaware of these beliefs and behave in the way that is considered inappropriate in the Thai context.

Stage's (1999) study aims to demonstrate the dynamic nature of international organisations. She concludes that, 'Participation and negotiation centered on fundamental differences between what the parent organization required and what the local employees knew to be appropriate for conducting business in Thailand, thereby casting cultures in the organization as negotiating for legitimization of their business norms'. (ibid:272) Her findings confirm that there is a gap in cross-cultural understanding between the Thai and American ways of doing business.

Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin (1999) have conducted an exploratory study of communication competence through 413 questionnaires completed by supervisors, subordinates and co-workers in 14 Thai business organisations. They refer to Hofstede's (1980) study of organisation behaviour in a multinational corporation which has branches worldwide. Before we discuss their findings, it is useful to look at Hofstede's work.

Hofstede (1980, 1991) conducted an extensive survey on values and organisation behaviour in subsidiaries of one large multinational corporation – IBM (under the code name: HERMES), in 40 countries around the world. By using theoretical reasoning and statistical analysis to analyse his corpus of over 116,000 questionnaires completed locally by IBM employees in those 40 countries including Thailand, Hofstede (1980, 1991) revealed four main dimensions on which national cultures differ: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. According to Hofstede (1980), the Thai culture is characterized by low individualism, high uncertainty avoidance, high power distance and low masculinity. Although detailed explanation of how these characteristics develop in Thailand is not provided as this is part of his large-scale study, his findings about the Thai culture is rather comprehensive and understandable. Thais favour low individualism and high uncertainty avoidance because they greatly value social harmony, and, as a result, tend to avoid any conflict by being considerate and interacting with others in a



harmonious way. High power distance is influenced by the hierarchical social system in which class distinction is made through interpersonal factors such as age, family and/or educational background and occupational position. Thais have low masculinity because, in general, they prefer non-assertive or low-competitive styles in doing business. This characteristic may be influenced by Buddhism which values modesty.

Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin's (1999) findings support the above four characteristics of the Thai culture outlined by Hofstede (1980). They report that Thais who are considered to be communicatively competent 'know how to avoid conflict with others; control their emotions; display respect, tactfulness, modesty, and politeness; and use appropriate pronouns in addressing others'. (Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin 1999:382) Some of their findings match Stage's (1999) study in that Thai organisations emphasize protocol (e.g. gift giving, etc.) and smoothness in work relationships. I will not go into further details of the above-mentioned studies as they mainly concern managerial aspects of business communication rather than linguistic perspectives which are the focus of this thesis. From the points drawn from these studies as highlighted above, we can now see in general how the Thai culture influences the communication behaviour of Thai business professionals and their day-to-day business operations. Cultural values such as modesty, harmony, politeness and deference will later be discussed with reference to persuasive business correspondence in my corpus. The next section provides some background to the Thai business letter writing.

## **7.2 Background to the Thai Business Letter Writing**

It is apparent that Thai business communicators share a preferred repertoire of business concepts, attitudes, and communication behaviours influenced by their native culture. (e.g. Stage 1999; Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin 1999) In this

section, we will look at some characteristics of Thai letters in order to understand their style of writing which may be transferred to their English business letter writing.

In her book, Muntasutra-Paengpipat (1997) describes various techniques for effective writing in terms of lexical, syntactic and semantic structures, and explores different genres of written discourse in Thai such as letters, reports and memos, documentary and expository essays, promotional slogans, short stories and plays. She divides Thai letters into 3 main categories: personal, business and governmental. The separation between business and governmental letters is also acknowledged in Na-Nakorn (1998) and Krungwong (1998), the former mainly focuses on how to write both types of letters effectively while the latter involves all aspects of written Thai business discourse. As the meaning of a personal letter is universally understood, I will focus only on business and governmental letters. The basic differences between these two types are commonly known among Thai people, and are worth noting in brief here.

In Thailand, the governmental sector consisting of various ministries has a different style of letter writing from the private or business sector. The symbol of Garuda (an Asian mythical animal) is always printed in the centre of the very top part of the letter as a crest. There are fixed bureaucratic formats of the letters in accordance with their sub-genres, for example, letters of command, letters of announcement, letters of report (similar to minutes of meeting in the business world) and one general format for other common types such as request and invitation. Some specific features include a code name and number specific to each governmental office identifying the source of the letter, the date (normally written in Thai numbers not Arabic numbers), month (always spelt in full) and year (in Buddhist calendar), and the positions of heading(s), writer's office's name, subject title(s), and optional stamp (with the office's own mark or crest or a Garuda-shaped crest with the office's name underneath). Two authentic governmental letters (one in English, one in Thai) are provided in Appendix G. Most letters in this category are typically used in the Thai



bureaucratic context. They are officially written in formal Thai (widely known as *official Thai*) by government officials, and need to be reviewed, approved of and copied to file before sending to Thai recipients in either the public sector or the private sector. Business letters are those used by Thai business professionals. They use less formal language and do not have fixed formats and specific features like governmental letters.

Letters written in English by Thai officials are different from those written in Thai as they do not follow the Thai patterns, and are generally more flexible. They tend to drop the above-mentioned fixed formats and keep only a few features such as the code name and number. The crest of Garuda is less frequently used. In my corpus of English business correspondence collected from a number of Thai offices, there are a small number of governmental letters, all of which do not follow the fixed Thai formats and styles of writing. They could have been written in a different way if they were in Thai (i.e. using official Thai which is very deferential, distant, and topic-oriented). Note that the Thai language has various levels, some of which (e.g. official Thai) do not have direct translation into English. Those letters involve business affairs with English-speaking companies. Judging from their content and styles of writing instead of their sources, I consequently counted them as normal business letters and included them in my corpus.

There are some interesting ways to write Thai business letters effectively as identified by Muntasutra-Paengpipat (1997), Na-Nakorn (1998) and Krungwong (1998). Muntasutra-Paengpipat (1997:106) provides four essential rules in writing Thai business letters: 1) grammatical correctness; 2) unity and coherence; 3) clarity; and 4) courtesy. Na-Nakorn (1998:204) shares a similar view with Muntasutra-Paengpipat (1997), and adds that a business letter needs to be goal-oriented and to the point. Krungwong (1998:123-124) describes seven characteristics of a good Thai business letter, four of which are similar to Muntasutra-Paengpipat's (1997) essential rules.

The other three include politeness, cleanliness and appropriateness. Many rules are comparable to the five C's of business-letter writing (clearness, conciseness, completeness, correctness and courtesy) cited in Powell (1991:41) as mentioned in 2.3. It is interesting that politeness, cleanliness and appropriateness are also taken into account in the Thai essential rules. Krungwong (1998) emphasises the use of polite language that shows deference to the reader, and expresses that cleanliness (e.g. no mark, cross or stain on the paper) can create a good first impression to the reader. As for appropriateness (similar to the five C's *courtesy*), she explains that the writer should follow proper business etiquette and be considerate to the feelings of the reader by using the right style of writing.

Muntasutra-Paengpipat (1997), Na-Nakorn (1998) and Krungwong (1998) state that a business letter should be accurate and to the point. Interestingly, they tend focus on its clarity and courtesy. Na-Nakorn (1998:205) says, 'A business letter should not be too brief because it needs to provide explanation in order to please the reader and fulfill its business purpose(s)'. Krungwong (1998:124) confirms this trend by saying, 'the writer has to be careful not to make the letter too short because it may sound like it lacks clarity, cordiality and appropriate etiquette'. Na-Nakorn (1998) expresses that a business letter is not as deferential as a governmental letter because it always uses more we- and you-orientations. The above-mentioned is perceived as a good writing style of a Thai business letter. It is evident that in writing a Thai business letter, most Thais need to be aware of its clarity and accuracy, but at the same time, they are taught to take into account both cordiality and appropriateness as these characteristics are also important if they want to communicate effectively. To illustrate what a good Thai business letter should be like, I have literally translated one sample of a Thai letter of invitation marked by Na-Nakorn (1998:257) as a good model as follows:



## SCT

For the kind attention of Khun Suwat Thongthanakul,

During our path of doing business for almost eight years by performing the role of the business operator of complete computer and communication systems, SCT Computer Co. Ltd. has always aimed at creating benefits and extreme satisfaction for its business counterparts. At present, the Company has been under a re-engineering project in terms of the organisational structure. Remarkably, the Company has received an honour from IBM (Thailand) Co. Ltd. to co-operate by owning some of the Company's shares, which is considered as an auspicious sign to the path of prosperous growth of the Company in the future.

For this occasion, the Company would like to invite you, who are part of our business success as perceived by us at SCT Computer, to give us the honour of your company in our reception to be held as a thanking event to celebrate our success in the business operation as of last year. The reception is on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1991, at 18.30 –20.00 hr. at Vipavadee Ballroom, Central Plaza Hotel in Ladprao District.

The Company does hope that you will give us the honour of your company in this event, and would like to take this opportunity to express our thankfulness for your kind co-operation which you have been continually giving us.

Respectfully yours,

(signature)

Prof. Dr. Somsak Chooto  
Chairman

(signature)

Suradej Mukkayangkura  
Managing Director

*(unofficially translated from a Thai sample in Na-Nakorn (1998:257))*

We can see that a typical Thai business letter is rather long and full of explanations. Native English speakers especially those who are not accustomed to the Thai business culture may consider the above letter of invitation as unnecessarily long and too polite or respectful. It is commonly known that a good English business letter should be short and simple (as expressed in the well-known K.I.S.S. rule: *Keep It Short and*

*Simple*). However, it is apparent that Thais prefer clarity, which involves long introduction or explanation, and politeness/appropriateness, to shortness and simplicity when writing a business letter in Thai. In their English business letters, especially letters of request (see Chapter 5), we can see that Thais generally write longer than native English speakers, and they often include introductory paragraph(s) and several expressions of gratitude. In the following sections, I will examine the politeness strategies and rhetorical appeals in my corpus of cross-cultural persuasive business correspondence.

### **7.3 Politeness in Persuasive Business Correspondence**

It can be said that politeness in the Thai context is based on the ‘kreng jai’ concept. There is no exact English equivalent for the Thai word ‘kreng jai’; the closest word is perhaps ‘consideration’. Sukwiwat (1983:205) states that ‘kreng jai’ can be translated as “to have consideration for (someone)” or “to be reluctant to impose on (someone)”. As mentioned earlier in 7.1, Thais value social harmony, and typically try their best to avoid arguments or conflicts in order to maintain what Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin (1999:384) call ‘an emotionally and physically stable environment’. Therefore, they tend to be very considerate with other people’s feelings and show proper respect, etiquette and protocol, which can be considered as their politeness norms. The concept of ‘kreng jai’ is obvious especially in the Thai status-oriented relationship, e.g. deference to authority. Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1995) refer to ‘kreng jai’ to explain why Thais show reluctance towards expressing disagreement or criticism to their seniors in classroom and work-related training situations. Sukwiwat (1983:205) explains, ‘The concept also involves the desire to be self-effacing, respectful, and extremely considerate in the sense of avoiding embarrassment for others and not intruding on their space or time’.



Richards and Sukwiwat (1982:121) regard the 'kreng jai' concept as the 'key component of the *ethos* of social behaviour' and link it to the concept of face:

In Thai, the concept of face is referred to by the term 'kreng jai', which means taking the other person's face needs and feelings into account so that no threat is involved either to speaker or to hearer. This leads to indirect strategies for the performance of certain types of speech acts in situations where English speakers would not necessarily see the need for indirectness, since they perceive no threat to face. Thus in the case where A wants a favour from B, the preferred strategy for a Thai is to hint and talk around the topic. (ibid:121)

As the Thai concept of 'kreng jai' is related to 'face', it is essential to consider the seminal concept of face and politeness formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987). In their detailed study, Brown and Levinson (1987:61) explain that 'face' is the public self-image that every member (of a society) wants to claim for himself/herself. They say, 'Thus face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction.' (ibid:61) To maintain each other's face can be compared to the Thai 'kreng jai' concept. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), maintaining the other's face in interaction is to recognise and respect his/her public self-image, which can be achieved through the use of politeness to express or acknowledge such recognition and respect while communicating. As far as I know, apart from a few studies such as Richards and Sukwiwat (1982), Sukwiwat (1983), and Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1995) mentioned above, there is no particular research paradigm of the 'kreng jai' concept. One reason could be the fact that it is part of everyday life in the Thai society, which every member knows so intuitively that there is no need to study or explain the concept. Therefore, in this section I will examine politeness strategies in relation to Brown and Levinson's (1987) study. However, my focus is to refer to it from a cross-cultural perspective with regard to my TH and NT corpus.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face consists of two aspects: negative face and positive face. The former represents the individual's desire to be unimpeded in

his/her actions; that is, 'freedom to action and freedom from imposition'. (ibid: 61) The latter refers to 'the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants'. (ibid:61) Brown and Levinson (1987) introduce a two-dimensional model consisting of a speaker (S) and a hearer (H) [also referred to as an addressee], both of whom interact with each other and are endowed with positive and negative face. Basically, they suggest that face-threatening acts (FTAs) take place in the communication whereby the speaker and the addressee's faces are threatened by various communicative acts; therefore, they have to use politeness strategies to preserve each other's face. In this model, certain acts are intrinsically face-threatening, and may then require politeness or, in other words, strategic redress, to reduce or remove the threat. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), those acts that threaten the addressee's negative face include requests, orders, suggestions, offers and promises; and those acts that threaten the addressee's positive face include complaints, accusations, insults, disagreements and expressions of violent emotions.

Although Brown and Levinson's (1987) data are mainly spoken discourse, their concept of face and FTA model can be applied to written discourse. (Zhu 2000a; Pilegaard 1997; Yeung 1997; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1996; Nickerson 1993; Maier 1992; Connor 1988, as discussed in 2.3) In this case, the speaker (S) is the writer of a business letter, and the hearer or addressee (H) is the reader. My main data of persuasive business correspondence (i.e. sales promotion, request, and invitation letters) can also be treated as face-threatening acts because they involve either offers or requests. The main purpose of sales promotion letters is to introduce the offer and capture the reader's attention to the offer. The offer or the promotion of the offer might threaten the reader's face, so it can be considered as an FTA. Letters of request contain requests, i.e. for action or information (or both). Although the main purpose of letters of invitation is to invite, their invitation messages can also be viewed as requests for the physical appearance of the reader (e.g. to a meeting, seminar,



conference, reception). Therefore, all types of letters here involve FTAs. It is interesting to see if the NT and TH writers try to minimize the threat and preserve the reader's face in those letters; and if they do, the question is how they achieve it.

Brown and Levinson (1987:68-69) classify two main strategies for doing the FTAs: (1) *on record*: a) baldly without redressive action and b) with redressive action, and (2) *off record* (e.g. expressing FTAs very indirectly by using, for example, metaphors and ironies).<sup>1</sup> Under (1b) 'on-record strategy with redressive action' above, there are two types of politeness: positive and negative politeness. These strategic acts of politeness are the main concern in the present section.

Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of H, the positive self-image that he claims for himself. Positive politeness is approach-based; it 'anoints' the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, S wants H's wants (e.g. by treating him as a member of an in-group, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked). (ibid:70)

Positive politeness can be achieved through the assurance by the writer that he/she is 'of the same kind' (ibid:72) as the reader. As Brown and Levinson (1987:72) point out, the speaker (or, in this case, the writer) can avoid or minimize the debt implications of FTAs such as requests and offers, either by referring indirectly to the reciprocity and ongoing relationship between the addressee and himself or by including the addressee and himself equally as participants in or as benefitors from the request or offer. Giving additional offers or promises is considered another positive-politeness strategy to minimize the FTAs. (see op.cit.:125) In sum, positive politeness is realized through expressions of solidarity, and sometimes additional offers or promises to preserve the addressee's positive face.

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike spoken discourse, off-record strategy is rarely found in written persuasive business correspondence such as sales promotion, request and invitation letters in my corpus presumably because the writer needs to be clear that the reader gets the message correctly. Therefore, I will not consider it in this analysis.

Negative politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint that the speaker expresses to the addressee:

Face-threatening acts are redressed with apologies for interfering or transgressing, with linguistic and non-linguistic deference, with hedges on the illocutionary force of the act, with impersonalizing mechanisms (such as passives) that distance S and H from the act, and with other softening mechanisms that give the addressee an 'out', a face-saving line of escape, permitting him to feel that his response is not coerced. (ibid:70)

To sum up, apologies, hedges, impersonalizing mechanisms (e.g. passive voice, avoidance of the terms 'you' and 'I', softening mechanisms (e.g. the politeness marker 'please'), and expressions of indebtedness are among the main strategies that Brown and Levinson (1987) consider as negative-politeness strategies.

In his study of the language of administration and bureaucracy, Iedema (1997) analyses directives or commands in written correspondence. He regards 'please' as a mitigator which 'codes respect and may realize status difference'. (ibid:75) He states, 'Please' is the short form of the older 'if it pleases you', which might be read as providing the addressee with the opportunity to say 'it doesn't please me, so I won't comply'. (ibid:75) If we regard 'please' in this aspect, in addition to its role as the politeness marker, 'please' can mark an 'out' or an open-ended option for the reader to refuse the offer or request, which is also considered as a negative-politeness strategy according to Brown and Levinson (1987).

I will examine all three types of persuasive business correspondence in terms of the politeness strategies with reference to Brown and Levinson's (1987) study of FTAs outlined above. Full examples and/or excerpts of each letter type will be presented and followed by discussions.



### 7.3.1 Letters of Sales Promotion

Positive politeness is found extensively in this type of letter. As the writer wants to draw the reader's attention to the offer, he/she tends to develop a face-preserving strategy by treating the reader as an in-group member whom he/she understands and cares for. This strategy is normally found at the beginning of the letter before the writer introduces the offer in detail. For example,

[Promoting fee-paying courses]

‘With the dramatic changes which have occurred in Asia since July, it is clear that change is unavoidable and that the quality of your human resources is paramount to sustainable national and corporate growth and development. To you in addressing this need, we offer two training programs which we believe you will find helpful.’ (NT04S)

[Promoting life insurance]

‘At Royal and Sun Alliance, we know that when life is treating you well, preparing for the unexpected is the last thing on your mind. But accidents do happen, and every year thousands of families are thrown into financial hardship when misfortune strikes. As part of our service to you and to emphasise the importance of protecting against such unexpected misfortunes, we are taking this opportunity to offer you Baht 50,000 Accidental Death Cover for 5 years, absolutely free of charge.’ (AMEX13S)

[Promoting hotel/hospitality services]

‘We are pleased to have you as a member of our Felix Card Club. At Felix, all guests are important, but as a Felix Card Member, you can enjoy the special benefits and privileges, available only to members.’ (TH17S)

It is noticeable that the above examples represent expressions of solidarity, which are considered as positive politeness. Negative politeness is mainly found in terms of (a) the politeness marker ‘please’ especially in Move 5, *Soliciting response* (see 4.4.5), such as the formulaic expression ‘For more information, *please* contact...’, and (b) expressions of thankfulness or gratitude such as ‘Thank you for your continued support’ (TH17S). As expressions of thankfulness represent indebtedness, I regard

them as a negative-politeness strategy. There are some differences in the use of this strategy between the NT and TH writers.

Most NT letters do not express thanks to the reader. However, 50% of them have polite final sentences which show good will and friendliness, for example,

‘I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you at Cambridge this August.’ (NT03S)

‘With best wishes for the upcoming holiday season.’ (NT04S)

On the other hand, a lot of AMEX and TH letters express thanks or gratitude to the reader either at the beginning of the letters or towards the end. Examples are given below:

‘This is our way of saying “Thank you” for using the American Express Card.’ (AMEX08S, at the beginning of the letter)

‘To say “many thanks” to you for using the American Express Card we’re offering you a spread of really tasty dining privileges.’ (AMEX09S, at the beginning of the letter)

‘Thank you for your continued support.’ (TH17S, at the end of the letter)

‘The Thai Wah Group would like to convey its sincere gratitude in anticipation of your kind support of this worthy cause.’ (TH18S, towards the end of the letter)

It may be noted that some of these examples are using the ‘stock expression’, which expresses good manners but does not necessarily mean genuine gratitude all the time. It could still be considered as a face-preserving strategy.

One AMEX letter clearly shows the negative-politeness strategy of expressing thanks or gratitude in order to preserve both the writer and the reader’s faces in a subtle yet well-organised way:

‘A few weeks ago, we sent a letter informing you about the launch of the Travel Rewards Card from American Express and invited you to become a member. If your application has already been sent, we would like to thank you and let you know that your application is being processed. However, if you are still undecided, we would like to remind you one more time about the Card and its unique benefits.’ (AMEX11S)



We can see that expressions of thankfulness or gratitude are used more extensively in sales promotion letters written by Thais than in those written by native English speakers. The politeness marker ‘please’ is used more often in TH imperative clauses. In a number of AMEX (American-influenced-Thai style) letters, ‘please’ is replaced by mitigators such as the adverbs ‘just’ and ‘simply’. For example, ‘To enroll, *just* return the correctly completed Enrollment Form...’ (AMEX12S), and ‘If you wish to enjoy this added protection, *simply* tick “YES”...’ (AMEX13S). This is also a negative-politeness strategy. Sometimes NT and AMEX letters use imperative clauses without any politeness marker or mitigators at all, which, can be considered as *baldly on record*, following Brown and Levinson (1987). For example, ‘*Apply* now and you will be entitled to the following exclusive benefits...’ (AMEX12S), and ‘*Come and experience* it all with Scotland’s Hotels of Distinction. *Call* free on 0800...’ (NT06S).

In conclusion, positive politeness and negative politeness are found in sales promotion letters in my corpus. The former is realised through expressions of solidarity. This is similar to Zhu’s (2000a) findings which report that Chinese sales letters always express solidarity. The latter is found in the form of the politeness marker ‘please’ (and, to a lesser extent, the mitigators ‘just’ and ‘simply’ in AMEX letters), and expressions of thankfulness or gratitude. Interestingly, the ‘baldly on record’ strategy is only found in AMEX and NT letters. In general, the negative-politeness strategy is used more than positive-politeness strategy in Thai letters (both AMEX and TH) especially expressions of gratitude which are considered to be suitable and effective in the Thai business context.

### 7.3.2 Letters of Request

In my corpus, 80 letters of request are context-dependent and diverse in that some involve establishing new business contacts and some involve old business

relationships. Expressions of solidarity are not always relevant especially in the context of old business relationships. Therefore, negative politeness tends to be more predominant than positive politeness in general. I have chosen two pairs of sample NT and TH letters of request in order to illustrate this point. Both pairs request information from the readers. Discussions are provided after the presentation of each pair.

**Sample 7.1: NT42R**

Birmingham City Council  
Department of Leisure and  
Community Services

Business Information  
Country Sequence  
Birmingham Central Library  
Chamberlain Square  
Birmingham  
B3 3HQ  
UK

Aug 27, 1998

Embassy of Thailand  
333 Grosvenor Crescent  
SW7 5JB

Dear Sir/Madam,

Birmingham Central Library is one of the largest libraries in Europe. We keep economic and commercial information on most of the countries of the world. I would be extremely grateful to receive any free information you can send me about Thailand.

I would like to thank you in advance for any information or publications that you are able to send for our library.

Yours sincerely,  
Signature  
Robert Watson

**Sample 7.2: TH49R**

DigItUp  
EXPORT

June 20, 2000

Office of Commercial Affairs  
22 Herford Street  
London, W1Y 7DX  
U.K.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to you today to introduce ourselves, DigItUp Export Co., Ltd., a newly established export company who mainly handle (*sic.*) on exporting educational toys around the world.

For the time being our main product is “FOZEX” – Fossil Excavation Puzzle, a game for brain. It’s simple enough for schoolchildren to explore the mystique world of prehistoric age. It’s also a stimulating game for the whole family enjoyable way for parents to spend time with their kids.



To make things easier, please find enclosed a leaflet of “FOZEX” which is self-explanatory on how wonder (*sic.*) they are. We are very proud to present our Made in Thailand product and to be a part of educational toy business from Thailand. We would be highly appreciated if you could kindly provide us the list of toy importers in United Kingdom (*sic.*) for further business relationship.

Thank you for your kind co-operation. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact: (*name, postal address in Thailand, telephone and fax numbers plus email address*).

Very truly yours,  
DigItUp Export Co., Ltd.  
Signature  
Titaya Choosang  
Managing Director

Both samples are written to unknown readers as a first-time contact. They are quite different in terms of politeness strategies. Sample 7.1 (NT42R) uses only one negative-politeness strategy; that is, expressions of gratitude or indebtedness: ‘*I would be extremely grateful to receive...*’ in the first paragraph, and ‘*I would like to thank you in advance...*’ in the second paragraph. On the other hand, Sample 7.2 (TH49R) involves different types of negative-politeness strategies. Firstly, we can see that the request message comes at the end of the third paragraph after a long introduction. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 5, a large number of the TH letters of request have what Hinds (1990) calls ‘a delayed introduction of purpose’. This can be regarded as a hedging strategy under negative politeness. The actual request ‘*We would be highly appreciated if you could kindly provide us...*’ also demonstrates the negative-politeness strategy of self-effacement and deference through the use of passive voice (as underlined) and the term ‘kindly’. The expression of thankfulness is used in the beginning of the last paragraph. It is followed by an offer. This offer sentence ‘*If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact...*’ can be considered as a positive-politeness strategy because it is used by the writer to preserve the positive face of the reader which may be threatened by the request.

The above two samples are carefully selected because they represent the majority of NT and TH letters. However, they are not 100% comparable because they come from different business contexts (library vs. import/export businesses). Most NT letters of request are short and tend to use less politeness strategies than TH letters. Their

favourite strategies are (a) expressions of gratitude which are found in many request sentences (see 5.4.1, declarative under self-obligation) and in most post-requests (see 5.6), (b) the politeness marker ‘please’ used extensively in the imperative requests [e.g. ‘*Please fax the complete questionnaire to...*’ (NT02R)], and the modal-initial interrogative requests [e.g. ‘*Could you please make the meeting at...*’ (NT12R)]. They also use more ‘baldly on record’ strategy in their requests through ‘need’ statements (e.g. I need...) and ‘wish’ statements (e.g. I ask you to..., We request...), and through modal-initial interrogative without the politeness marker ‘please’ (e.g. Could you...), which is not found in TH letters. (see 5.4.1 for details and examples)

As in Sample 7.2, the TH letters generally use various politeness strategies ranging from hedging (delayed introduction of the actual requests), passive voice, excessive use of ‘kindly’, offers, expressions of gratitude and the politeness markers ‘please’. The last two strategies are found in the same manner as described under the NT favourite strategies above. The TH unique way of using ‘kindly’ is in the form of the imperative request ‘*please kindly...*’, which is not found in any NT letter. Note that the positive-politeness strategy ‘offer(s)’ is found in only 12 letters, 8 of which are TH and the other four are NT. No other positive-politeness strategy (e.g. claiming common ground/expressing solidarity) is found, which seems to contradict Pilegaard’s (1997:241) findings which report that ‘positive and negative politeness are equally frequent in the early stages of business contact’.

The next pair of examples are of a similar context; that is, formal old business relationships. The first one is written by a British person to the Thai ambassador in London; and the latter is written by this Thai ambassador to the president of the U.K.-based International Maritime Organisation.



Sample 7.3: NT40R

The Natural History Museum

Department of Zoology  
London

Direct line: xxxx xxx xxxx  
Facsimile: xxxx xxx xxxx

22 October 1998

Dear Mr Sukjai,

I am preparing a collaborative proposal for submission to the European Union *Environment in Developing Countries* Budget heading B7-6200. The project centres on conserving and managing marine resources. I need information on official Thai policy and priorities in the area of conservation and biodiversity and how they apply to marine ecosystems. Thailand has recently become a signatory of the UN Convention on Conservation of Biological Diversity (also known as the Rio Convention). I am trying to find out if they have issued a Biodiversity Action plan and how to get a copy. I would be grateful for any help you can provide.

Yours sincerely,  
Signature  
Dr Richard J L Peterson  
Head of Division, Invertebrates II

Sample 7.4: TH34R

No. xx/xxxx/XXXX

The Royal Thai Embassy  
London

24 June 1998

Dear Mr Jones,

The Royal Thai Embassy presents its compliments to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and, with reference to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the International Maritime Organization, has the honour to inform the latter that Thailand will organize a week of special events to commemorate the above-mentioned significant anniversary in Thailand during 23-26 September 1998 under the title of the “World Maritime Day”.

The Royal Thai Embassy has further the honour to elaborate the said special events to be organized that it will be composed of a more extensive public relation (*sic.*) programme in order to promote wider and deeper knowledge of the role and significance of IMO in world maritime from the past to present and in the future. This includes a maritime exhibition, a television programme as well as a speech delivered by Minister of Transport and Communications of Thailand. To meet this objective, it deems very beneficial if Thailand receives first-hand information like printed materials, video tapes, copies of pictures from the archives, relevant photographs and posters, etc. from the IMO. In this regard, the IMO’s contribution to the preparation and the success of the above-mentioned events would be most appreciated.

The Royal Thai Embassy avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the International Maritime Organization the assurances of its highest consideration.

Yours faithfully,  
Signature  
H.E. Mr Prawit Sukjai  
Ambassador

International Maritime Organization  
4 Albert Rd, Embankment  
London SE1 7SR

We can see that these two examples are very different. Sample 7.3 (NT40R) is much less formal. It is shorter, straightforward and to the point. The request comes early at

the beginning and can be regarded as baldly on record because it is quite direct (*'I need information on...'*). The only politeness strategy used is the negative-politeness expression of gratitude *'I would be grateful for any help you can provide'*. On the contrary, Sample 7.4 (TH34R) is more formal and implicit. It has a long introduction which delays the request until the end of the second paragraph. Again, this is viewed as a negative-politeness strategy of hedging. This letter demonstrates extreme deference and respect through negative politeness of impersonalizing mechanisms and expressions of appreciation. Impersonalizing mechanisms include the avoidance of 'I' or 'you' and the use of passive voice (e.g. the last sentence of TH34R's second paragraph above).

In summary, the TH letters of request tend to create a distance between the writer and the reader. A variety of politeness strategies especially negative politeness are used in order to reduce the threat caused by the request and preserve the reader's face. This supports Pilegaard's (1997) findings which report on the predominant use of negative-politeness strategy in old business relationships. Hedging or 'a delayed introduction of purpose' can be considered as cultural-specific. Also the combined use of 'please kindly' is somewhat unique since it is not found in any NT letter. It seems that, when compared to the NT letters, the trend of the TH letters of request is more oriented toward self-effacement and deference which are, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative-politeness strategies.

### **7.3.3 Letters of Invitation**

In contrast to the letters of sales promotion and request where negative politeness are dominant, positive politeness is found rather extensively in my corpus of 40 invitation letters. It is expressed through the focus of shared interests and mutual benefits between the writer or the writer's company and the reader. As the writer wants to invite or request the reader's attendance to a socio-business activity such as a meeting,



seminar, reception, etc., he/she tends to relate the activity to the reader’s business or personal interests. The NT and TH examples are presented as follows:

**Sample 7.5: NT09I**

ABN-AMRO Bank

Bangkok Branch  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, P.C. Tower  
131 Sailom Road  
Bangkok THAILAND 10500

Telephone: (xxx) xxx xxxx-xx  
Facsimile: (xxx) xxx xxxx-x  
Telex 88888 A A BK TH

6<sup>th</sup> May 1997

Khun Banpod Sondee  
Chairman  
Siam Thai Bank  
2 Siam Street  
Bangkok

Dear Khun Banpod,

In less than two years, the new European currency – the euro – will be introduced. This event will lead to a fundamental change in the international world of finance and investment, and have far reaching consequences for institutions and companies in Asia.

In order to explore the issues, challenges, and consequences concerning the new currency, ABN AMRO Bank will present a conference titled:  
*The Euro, a Window of Opportunity*

Speakers include Mrs. Naya Vechinsri, Assistant Governor of the Bank of Thailand and Mr. Gerard Kenneth, Senior Executive Vice President of ABN AMRO Bank.

You are cordially invited to attend this conference on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 1997 at the Ballroom of the Regent Hotel, 155 Rajdamri Road, Bangkok 10330. The conference will start at 10.30 hr. Enclosed you will find a detailed programme.

Kindly reply by faxing the enclosed registration form to Katherine Sinsara by Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1997.

We look forward to welcoming you to this conference.

Yours sincerely,  
Signature  
George Bernard  
Country Manager  
ABN AMRO Bank

**Sample 7.6: TH39I**

ABB

Nestle (Thailand) Ltd.  
600 Prajit Road  
Lumpini, Pathumwan  
Bangkok 10330

Khun Paul N.J. Smith  
Vice President  
Engineering Service

March 3, 2000

Subject: ABB Innovative Solution Seminar

Dear Sir/Madam,

ABB Limited has a pleasure (*sic.*) in inviting you and your engineers to attend the ‘ABB Innovative Solution Seminar’, which will take place on March 21, 2000 from 09:00-16.30 hrs. at the Imperial Queen’s Park Hotel, Bangkok. (The map to the hotel is enclosed.)

In this seminar, the spotlight will focus on ABB’s latest know-how and our state-of-the-art design of electrical equipment as well as the most advanced development of its application. For example, all attendants will witness our new design of HV SMART GIS type EXK-01, Terminal Substation, SMART MV Switchgear, Arc Detector, etc. More details of the seminar can be referred to by the enclosed Course Abstract and Seminar Program. This seminar is free of charge.

Kindly confirm your participation by return (*sic.*) the enclosed Confirmation Sheet to our fax. No. (02) 907-8830-2 within March 15, 2000. If more information is required, please contact Khun Hathai M. at Tel. 907-4633, Ext. 3261.

Yours faithfully,  
Signature  
Charnwit Aroonsangngam  
President

Both samples are oriented toward what the writer thinks the reader might be interested in as shared interests and mutual benefits. This is considered, according to Brown and Levinson (1987) as a positive politeness. Sample 7.6 (TH39I) also has an offer at the end (*If more information is required, please contact...*), which is also a positive-politeness strategy. In this type of letter, hedging does not normally take place as both NT and TH writers tend to put the invitation messages at the beginning of the letter. Those messages are typically baldly on record because the writer has to clearly express his intention to invite the reader, and presumably this type of letters is less face-threatening than the other two mentioned above. Negative politeness includes an occasional use of company’s name (instead of ‘I’ or ‘We’ as in the above examples ‘*ABN AMRO will present a conference titled...*’ and ‘*ABB Limited has a pleasure (sic.) in inviting you...*’) and passive voice. Note that the passive voice as in Sample 7.5 ‘*You are cordially invited...*’ is only found in a couple of NT letters. It represents ‘you-orientation’ which is used more often by the NT writers. Most TH letters tend to create collaborative image and relationship-building.

Interestingly, expressions of gratitude are rarely used. As explained in Chapter 6, the writer may not feel indebted to the reader because business invitations are normally for mutual interests or benefits, which are different from requests for a favour in



which expressions of indebtedness are usually essential. Nevertheless, softening mechanisms such as the politeness marker ‘please’ and ‘kindly’ are used in invitation letters along with the open option for the reader’s refusal (e.g. by ticking ‘no’ on the registration form, or informing the writer of his/her decline of invitation by mail or telephone).

To sum up, the NT and TH letters use ‘baldly on record’ strategy especially in the invitation messages. Positive politeness is found in terms of description of shared interests and mutual benefits, and, to a lesser extent, offers which give the reader an opportunity to find out more about the events he/she is invited to. Negative politeness is mainly characterized by occasional impersonalizing mechanisms and softening mechanisms. The TH letters of invitation generally involve more collaborative image and relationship-building than the NT ones.

#### **7.3.4 Overall Discussion and Conclusion**

Following Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of face and FTAs, I have tried to identify some fundamental politeness strategies found in persuasive business letters: sales promotion, request and invitation. I am aware of the three independent sociological factors claimed to have a systematic effect on the level of politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987); that is, the social distance (D) between the speaker and the addressee, the relative power (P) between them, and the ranking of the imposition (R) involved in each FTA. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) and Yeung (1997) explore how these factors can predict the linguistic choice in cross-cultural business requests. However, due to the diverse nature of my corpus, I have chosen to analyse by contrasting pairs of letters rather than attempting to examine more fully role of the variables D, P and R because the lack of full contextual information means they are not always easy to infer from my corpus. My focus is then to use the corpus to generalize the politeness strategies found in each type of

persuasive letter and examine the similarities and differences of strategies used by the NT and TH writers in comparable contexts.

My overall findings report the use of positive politeness and negative politeness in persuasive business correspondence. Positive politeness includes expressions of solidarity (especially in sales promotion letters), offers (especially in request letters), and description of shared interests and mutual benefits (especially in invitation letters). Negative politeness is characterized by the presentation of self-effacement, formality and restraint expressed through various strategies such as softening mechanisms (e.g. the politeness marker ‘please’ and ‘kindly’), impersonalizing mechanisms (e.g. occasional avoidance of ‘I’ and ‘you’, the use of passive voice), hedging strategy of delayed introduction of purpose (found extensively in request letters), and expressions of gratitude or indebtedness (less common in invitation letters).

Hedging in the sense of Hinds’ (1990) ‘*quasi-inductive style of writing*’ in letters of request occurs mostly in TH letters because they tend to use long introductions before starting the requests. According to Hyland (1998:228), hedges represent interpersonal metadiscourse by withholding writer’s full commitment to statements. They include the modals ‘would’, ‘could’, ‘might’ as well as the adverb ‘perhaps’ and the term ‘it is possible’. Following Hyland (1998), we can say that hedges are extensively found in persuasive business letters because in my corpus the above-mentioned modals are used very frequently by both NT and TH writers especially in self-obligation statements such as ‘*I would be grateful if you could...*’.

The findings on the TH corpus can be related to the Thai concept of ‘kreng jai’. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of face and model of FTAs seem to help systemise the politeness strategies used by Thais, most of which are influenced by the ‘kreng jai’ concept. Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin (1999:411) point out that



the Thai societal belief in ‘kreng jai’ is embedded in the implicit norms that guide Thai organizational communication behavior. My findings further suggest that in general, the TH letters tend to promote more collaborative image and relationship-building than the NT ones which are more individualistic and goal-oriented. The next section will focus on the relationship between cultural conventions and rhetorical appeals in my corpus of persuasive business letters.

## 7.4 Rhetorical Appeals: Logos, Ethos, Pathos

Persuasive discourse can be studied using the Greek framework of western rhetoric originated by Aristotle. Campbell (1998), Hyland (1998) and Zhu (2001) refer to the Aristotelian concept of rhetoric in their analysis of persuasive business correspondence. Campbell (1998) examines rhetorical conventions in two business letters written in English by a native English speaker and by a Chinese speaker. He (ibid:38) explains the Aristotelian concept of persuasive rhetoric:

Aristotle noted that there are two kinds of persuasion, one stemming from sources external to the persuader (inartistic or atechnic proofs – witnesses, contracts, tortures, oaths) and those the speaker has to invent – entechnic proofs. “One must use the former and invent the latter” (Aristotle. Translated by Kennedy 1991:37).

Campbell (1998) focuses on the entechnic proofs (or artistic proofs) which, according to Aristotle, have three parts: *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, all of which are seen as inseparable although they may not have the same level of priority in persuasive discourse. Campbell (1998:38) states, ‘the logos represents arguments and evidence in the matter under discussion, pathos (emotion) the reader’s stake in that matter, and ethos (character) the claims of the author.’ His findings show that the English letter has a strong logical appeal (*logos*) and lacks any appeal to either *ethos* or *pathos* whereas the Chinese letter has an inseparable combination of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. Campbell (1998:40) concludes that ‘the concept of reason couched in emotion marks

a difference between Chinese and Western rhetorics.’ He also presents a reconstruction of each letter by improving its rhetorical conventions in order to enhance its effectiveness upon the reader.

Hyland’s (1998) study focuses on metadiscourse in 137 CEO’s persuasive letters in English that appeared in different annual reports of international and Hong Kong companies. He examines how CEOs use metadiscourse, which is considered as non-propositional material, to realise rational (*logos*), credible (*ethos*) and affective (*pathos*) appeals. Like Campbell (1998), he refers to the Aristotelian concept of classical rhetoric, which ‘has characterized persuasive discourse since Aristotle’. (ibid:233) According to Hyland (1998), rational appeals are realised through how writers logically define problems, support claims and state conclusions. Credibility appeals involve creating an *ethos* or the writers’ integrity and authority essential for credible communication. Pathos or affective appeals mean that the writers attend to the desired effects of his/her text on the readers by ‘looking at the text from the readers’ perspective, addressing their situation, empathizing with their values, and directly inviting them to respond’. (ibid:238) Hyland (1998) does not differentiate the nationality of the CEOs (e.g. Chinese vs. English) because he concentrates on classifying metadiscourse in the CEOs’ letters as a whole. He concludes that metadiscourse is central to the creation of rational, credible, and affective appeals in CEOs’ letters. (ibid:241) As metadiscourse is not the focus of my research, I will only consider the rhetorical appeals in a wider scope following Campbell (1998) and Zhu (2001).

Zhu’s (2001) comparative study of English and Chinese persuasive strategies in trade fair invitations supports Campbell’s (1998) findings. By examining the corpus of 20 authentic English letters written by native speakers and 20 authentic Chinese letters written by mainland Chinese businessmen, Zhu (2001) points out that the English letters have a strong *logos* while the Chinese letters tend to use *logos*, *ethos*, and



*pathos* simultaneously as they emphasize an appeal both to logic and to emotions. She cites Aristotle's (1991) concept of persuasive rhetoric and relates it to the Chinese rhetorical tradition in which 'there seem to be a clear stress on combining *pathos*, *ethos* and *logos*'. (Zhu 2001:5)

Although identifying *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* is not the ultimate goal of the present research, it is interesting to explore, to some extent, this Aristotelian concept in my corpus of persuasive business correspondence. This may create a better understanding of some cross-cultural persuasive strategies between Thai and English business professionals.

#### **7.4.1 Letters of Sales Promotion**

In this type of letter, the writer normally tries to promote sales by giving logical reasons to persuade the reader to buy the product or service. This can be considered as rational appeals, or *logos*. For example,

[Promoting hedge fund consulting service]

'With many national equity markets at record highs, and vulnerable to serious corrections, now may be an ideal time for you to add hedge funds to your portfolio.' (NT05S)

[Promoting stress management courses]

'Our programs will help you in all aspects of your professional and personal life. For instance, our first retreat on April 25 "Seven Plus One" combines the teachings of Dr Stephen R. Covey founder and chairman of the Covey Leadership Center and his highly successful workshop "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" with stress management programs which will not only accomplish positive business results but will also help you overcome the problems of stress, tension and strain.' (TH16S)

*Ethos* or credibility appeals in this type of letter can be compared to Move 1, *Establishing Credentials*, which is found in less than 50% of the letters. For example,

[Promoting business courses]

‘The Harvard Business School’s Focused Management Courses provide a highly charged one- to two-week educational experience led by senior Harvard Business School faculty members – some of the foremost innovators in their fields.’ (NT02S)

Pathos or affective/emotional appeals (e.g. the reader’s stake in the matter) are mostly found in the AMEX letters, for example,

‘Have a look through all we are offering this season...then treat yourself to the festive break you and your family really deserve.’ (AMEX10S)

‘In addition, you’ll be pleased to know that the new Card has no pre-set spending limit and is welcomed at establishments throughout Thailand and millions of establishments around the world.’ (AMEX11S)

‘Here’s something else you’ll be glad to know – as an American Express Cardmember, enrollment is simple in this high-level programme.’ (AMEX12S)

We can see that the AMEX writer here writes from the reader’s perspective in the way that involves emotional appeals as expressed through the choices of verbs or adjectives, e.g. ‘you and your family really *deserve*’, ‘you’ll be *pleased* to know’ and ‘you’ll be *glad* to know’. Only a few NT and TH letters show emotional appeals mostly through the formulaic expression ‘I/We look forward to welcoming/serving you’.

In sum, all 20 TH, AMEX and NT sales promotion letters tend to use *logos* more than *ethos* and *pathos*. As this corpus is small, I cannot assume that the above findings are culturally specific in the Thai promotional context.

#### 7.4.2 Letters of Request

In this corpus of 80 letters of request, *logos* appears in the explanation or detailing part of the letter, and sometimes in the actual requests. For example,



[Requesting company's prospectus/financial report]

'In order to provide the necessary information accurately and promptly to both the analyst and the investor, we would appreciate it if you would send us a copy of your company's prospectus/financial report mentioned above as soon as possible.' (NT11R)

[Requesting company's information]

'In order to ensure the overall quality of our operation, we will only include high-quality products and services in our website, and your hotel is our preferred choice.' (TH30R)

Both TH and NT writers tend to establish credibility (*ethos*) in this type of letters mostly in new business dealings. Generally, the TH letters use *ethos* more than the NT letters. The TH writer normally uses longer sentences and provides more information on the company's expertise than the NT writer does. To illustrate this, let us compare Samples 7.1 and 7.2 in the previous section. Their credibility appeals are expressed as follows:

'Birmingham Central Library is one of the largest libraries in Europe.'  
(NT42R)

'We are writing to you today to introduce ourselves, DigItUp Export Co., Ltd., a newly established export company who mainly handle (*sic.*) on exporting educational toys around the world.' (TH49R)

Another pair of examples shows a similar structure:

'Fortune Oil PLC is a London-listed company with oil-related operations and investments in the Far East.' (NT38R)

'Let us have the pleasure to introduce ourselves as one of the leading Exporters, Manufacturers and Traders of various kinds of Fabrics and Garments from the Kingdom of Thailand. We are well established and well known in the market since 1975.' (TH47R)

Sometimes the TH writer makes a reference to the source of contact, for example,

‘We are thankful to the Trade Information Division, Department of Export Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, Thailand in advising us to contact your section at (*sic.*) London.’ (TH52R)

Interestingly, *pathos* is somewhat unique to the TH letters. In addition to the formulaic expressions ‘I/We hope...’ and ‘I/We look forward to...’, which are almost sterile, the TH writers often express or imply how the reader’s help with the matter will create a positive effect, as in Sample 7.2:

[Requesting information from IMO]

‘In this regard, the IMO’s contribution to the preparation and the success of the above-mentioned events would be most appreciated.’ (TH34R)

The TH writers tend to emphasize the reader’s importance and how his/her help or cooperation will make a difference. Some more examples with emotional appeals are as follows:

[Requesting donation and/or cooperation in an exhibition]

‘Our success depends on your kind financial, moral and technical support.’ (TH06R)

[Requesting an industrial visit]

‘Having realized that your company has practised and well recognised for 5S Activities, we would like to take your company as our model for our 5S Activities implementation. This will improve our productivity so that we be able to provide a better product and service to our clients, like you, and society as well.’ (TH44R)

[Requesting cooperation in finding 2 participants for a workshop]

‘Your contribution would surely make this important event a success.’ (TH58R)

In TH44R above, the writer states the accomplishments of the reader’s company in a praiseworthy way, which, according to Campbell (1998), demonstrates a strong ‘*pathos*’. It is also noticeable that the TH writers sometimes link the company’s success to that of the society whereas the NT writers only focus on achieving their goal of request. To illustrate this, a pair of NT and TH letters is provided below:



**Sample 7.7: NT63R**

Ken Morse  
7 Beaumont Close  
Lancaster  
LA1 2 SH  
Tel. xxxxx xxxxxx  
Fax xxxxx xxxxxx

12 June 2000

Tourism Authority of Thailand  
49 Albemarle Street  
London  
W1X 3FE

Dear Sirs,

At present, I am compiling a database of waterfalls from around the world and to date I have approximately 60 names of waterfalls in Thailand.

Would you please advise me where I can obtain more information on the waterfalls in your Country and an indication of the costs that may be incurred.

The type of information I am interested in is listed below: -

1. A photograph or postcard of the Waterfalls.
2. The height, wide (*sic.*) and volumes.
3. Origins of the names together with any historical background.
4. Rock information.
5. Access.

When I have sufficient information, I will prepare a separate write-up for each of the waterfalls. Eventually it is hoped that this could then be a reference for Schools.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Signature  
Ken Morse

**Sample 7.8: TH19R**

Telephone Organization of Thailand  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Fortune Town  
Prabdapisek Road, Bangkok 13030  
Thailand  
Tel. xxxxxxxx  
Fax xxxxxxxx

May 30, 1996

Attention: Managing Director  
Telecommunications Executive Management Institute of Canada  
660, rue Brookale ouest, Bureau 147  
Montreal, Quebec  
Canada H3A 1B9  
Phone: xxxxxxxx  
Fax: xxxxxxxx  
Telex: xxxxxxxx

Subject: International Telecommunications Programmes

Dear Sir,

I have just learned about your Telecommunications Executive Management Institute of Canada (TEMIC) from TOT's staffs (*sic.*) who were once your programme's participants as one of the most well-known educational and training institute dedicated to the provision of comprehensive telecommunications programmes.

This prompted us to write to you as we feel sure that your programme may help increase contribution to TOT's progress as well as to our country's. Thus we would be very much obliged if you could send us TEMIC's international telecommunications programmes open during July – October 1996 mainly on network management trend & strategies, optical fibre and new services & technology & applications and other relevant subjects.

Thank you for your kind cooperation, we shall be pleased to hear from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Signature

(Mr Saksri Tanakarn)

Vice President of Department of Metropolitan Project Network Control

Both writers ask for some information from the reader, whom they have not contacted before. The rhetorical appeals are different in that TH19R uses more *pathos* by acknowledging the success of the reader's company in the first paragraph, and in the second paragraph, emphasizing how the reader's cooperation will benefit the writer at the company level and the national level. NT63R, on the other hand, does not use *pathos*. Its content is very factual, logical and goal-oriented. The writer makes less attempt to refer to the reader's perspective, which is the essence of the affective or emotional appeals (*pathos*).

The link between the company's success to the society's is also found in another type of request letters. For example,

[Requesting a list of canned food importers in U.K.]

'We intend to expand the Thailand's Foods to global markets and establish the well acknowledge (*sic.*) of Thai products to worldwide. Furthermore, the gaining of foreign currency to Thai monetary system would benefit the country trade deficit and enhance the wealth to Thai society. May we take this opportunity to brief ourselves in order to confident (*sic.*) you that we are the right company to execute the above mission.' (TH48R)

The above example shows the use of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*, and the orientation towards collectivism as the writer regards the company and the society as one. The examples below show how TH and NT requests for donation differ:



[Requesting donation]

‘The Annual Fund continues to support faculty salaries and student scholarships. Your generosity enables the school to recruit and retain the caring and able faculty that teach, coach, and guide our children, while providing a safe, positive, and wholesome environment.’ (NT05R)

[Requesting donation]

‘Although this is a small gesture on our part to participate in the “Thais help Thais” campaign, we believe that small steps can ultimately make big changes – not just for the lives involved but also for the country as a whole. But we cannot do it alone.’ (TH01R)

In sum, *logos* is predominant in the NT letters in which *ethos* and, especially, *pathos* are rather uncommon. It is apparent that the NT letters of request are oriented towards *logos* whereas the TH letters are oriented towards *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. The former is more individualistic and goal-oriented while the latter shows collectivism (company’s and society’s levels) and strong face-saving strategies through the use of emotional appeals.

### 7.4.3 Letters of Invitation

As mentioned earlier, Zhu (2001) compares persuasive strategies in 20 English and 20 Chinese letters of invitation to trade fairs. She notes that both types of letters demonstrate the *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos* in order to achieve the main purposes of inviting the reader and promoting the trade fair. ‘However, the stress varies: the English letters tend to stress the appeal to reason, whereas the Chinese ones place the focus on both logical and emotional appeals, and the host-guest relationship is accentuated throughout the letter.’ (ibid:15) The three types of appeals are found in the 40 letters of invitation in my corpus (consisting of various invitations, not just trade fair correspondence).

Logos is usually found in Move 1, *Establishing the context*, in which the writer gives background information, raises the issue, and/or states the purpose of invitation. For example,

[Invitation to a seminar]

‘As I am sure many of you are aware, this year marks the one hundreth (*sic.*) anniversary of the first visit of His Majesty King Rama V to Europe. This momentous trip, which had such an impact on both Thai foreign relations and domestic policies, is one that we at The Siam Society recognized as an event to not only celebrate, but to look at closely for all its ramifications.’ (TH20I)

Sometimes the writer expresses the rational appeals in the main invitation message (Move 2, *Inviting*), for instance, ‘*In order to explore the issues, challenges, and consequences concerning the new currency, ABN AMRO Bank will present a conference titled: ...*’ (NT09I) Logos is also found in Move 3, *Detailing* (under the evaluation and/or indication of the benefits). For example,

[Invitation to an e-business workshop/seminar]

‘The New Economy is about knowledge and ideas, and we believe your company will benefit from this exchange of knowledge and ideas with our experts.’ (TH35I)

Ethos or the credibility appeals are often mixed with *logos* as in the following example,

[Invitation to a conference]

‘The previous three conferences were very successful. Almost all those who were able to attend (see attached lists from 1996 and 1997) have suggested that we hold a similar conference in 1998 and have expressed their intention to attend, provided their schedules allow.’ (NT17I)

Ethos can be realized through the description of the socio-business activity to which the reader is invited. For instance, the *ethos* of an invitation to a seminar involves the structure or agenda, main speaker(s), and evaluation/indication of the benefit(s); all of which help establish the credibility of the writer’s company and are crucial to the reader’s decision whether to accept or decline the invitation.



Unlike the letters of request, *pathos* is less used in the letters of invitation. It is expressed in a rather different way. No letter shows an acknowledgement of the success of the reader's company. Only a few TH letters emphasize the reader's importance by implying that his/her support can make the event successful, for example, '*Looking forward to receiving your fullest support to make this forthcoming conference a success in Chiangmai.*' (TH14I) Most letters with the emotional appeals tend to focus on the writer's strong hope or anticipation for the reader's acceptance of the invitation. For example,

'So, Khun Viravat, I hope you will accept this invitation and join us in Barcelona.' (TH16I)

'We look forward to your warm participation.' (NT40I)

'We will be very much appreciated if you could be able to spend sometimes with us on this seminar.' (TH38I)

The NT writers use little *pathos* which is realized through some formulaic expressions such as 'I/We hope...' and 'I/We look forward to'. On the other hand, the TH writers tend to make more effort in showing their determined expectations for the reader's participation as we can see in the above examples. Another interesting feature of the TH letters with emotional appeals is that the writer sometimes demonstrates common ground with the reader by addressing his/her need or interest before encouraging him/her to accept the invitation. For example,

'I feel that these planned events will be of particular interest to Siam Society members and I very much hope you will have to opportunity to attend.'  
(TH20I)

As in the letters of request, collectivism is often expressed in the TH letters of invitation. In Samples 7.5 and 7.6 in the previous section, we can see that Sample 7.6 (TH39I) stresses more collaborative image. It implies the benefits that the reader can receive at a company level, not just at an individual level. Many TH letters reveal this

characteristic, and some explicitly express the mutual relationship-building, for example,

‘We hope to provide you with a better understanding of our operations and seek to further strengthen our business relationship and cooperation.’  
(TH22I)

In conclusion, my findings extend Zhu’s (2001) to a wider corpus of general letters of invitation: the NT letters use stronger logical appeals whereas the TH letters use both logical and emotional appeals at the same time (similar to Chinese letters in Zhu’s study). The TH letters also demonstrate more collaborative image than the NT ones do, which suggests collectivism similar to the TH letters of request. This resembles Zhu’s (2001) findings about her Chinese corpus as well.

## 7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored specific Thai cultural criteria, such as the concept of ‘kreng jai’, and used theories of politeness and rhetorical appeals to *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* to show differences not only between the TH and NT correspondence, but also differences across sales promotion, request, and invitation in these areas.

The main politeness strategies found in my persuasive corpus can be summarised as follows. Expressions of thankfulness or gratitude are more predominant in the TH sales promotion letters than in the NT ones. What Hinds (1990) calls *quasi-inductive style of writing* or a delayed introduction of purpose is a unique hedging strategy found exclusively in the TH letters of request. The NT requests tend to be more direct using ‘baldly on record’ strategy. Both TH and NT letters of invitation tend to provide a description of shared interests and mutual benefits, which is considered as a positive-politeness strategy, while using ‘baldly on record’ strategy in the invitation messages. However, given a similar formal context, the TH persuasive letters are



typically more indirect, deferential and self-effacing than the NT ones. Wierzbicka (1991:48) comments, 'English doesn't have the elaborate distance-building deferential devices of Far Eastern languages such as Japanese, Korean, Javanese or Thai'.

My findings on the rhetorical appeals support Campbell's (1998) and Zhu's (2001) in that the NT letters generally have a strong rational appeal or *logos*. The TH letters tend to use a combination of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, although they may not have the same priority. The TH letters of request exhibit emotional appeals to a greater extent than in the TH letters of sales promotion and invitation. Most TH letters seem to be oriented towards collectivism and relationship-building while most NT letters tend to be more individualistic. Perhaps this can support Wierzbicka's (1991:113) claim that the western culture does not aim at 'harmony' in the sense in which the Far Eastern culture does. It is clear that the Thai business letter writing is likely to have different writing conventions influenced by its socio-business culture. Thus, the findings reported in this chapter can be related to cultural differences worth noting for business professionals who want to effectively communicate cross-culturally.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **AUTHENTIC VS. TEXTBOOK MATERIALS: INVESTIGATING PERSUASIVE CORRESPONDENCE IN TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks can be regarded as the backbone of many Business English courses in Thailand especially those concerning business communication skills. Nowadays, a large number of Thai colleges and universities offer various Business English programs in which business letter writing is typically included as one of the main subjects. As an international business communication skill, English business letter writing is considered essential for Thai students who wish to pursue a career in both local and international business; and, as a result, textbooks and ‘how-to’ books on this subject are in high demand. In this chapter, I will examine samples of persuasive correspondence (i.e. sales promotion, request and invitation) in three textbooks used as coursebooks in leading universities in Thailand. An investigation into their move structure, textual features, politeness strategies and rhetorical appeals will be presented with an aim to explore the extent to which these textbook samples represent the authentic persuasive correspondence found in my corpus.

As the three selected textbooks on business English writing provide some detailed grammatical reference, I will also look at lexico-grammatical errors in my entire corpus and see if those textbooks have covered these errors in their grammatical reference. The use of salutations and complimentary closes will also be observed. This chapter aims to give some insights into the use of textbook materials in teaching business letter writing in English to Thai tertiary students in Thailand.



## 8.1 Introduction to the Three Selected Textbooks

Many books on English business letter writing in Thailand are ‘how-to’ books, most of which are translated into Thai (except English letter samples) from American or British ‘how-to’ books for self-study purposes. Textbooks or coursebooks on this subject are not abundant. There are a few textbooks written by Thai lecturers which are currently used in some well-known universities where those lecturers are working such as Chulalongkorn University (CU) and Thammasat University (TU). Some institutions use imported American and, to a lesser extent, British textbooks in their business writing courses. The graduate institution where I work, the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), offers an MA program in Language and Communication which uses an American textbook as a core material in one of the modules called ‘business communication’. In this chapter, I have selected three textbooks used in CU, TU and NIDA in order to examine their samples of persuasive correspondence:

1. *Jodmai Durakij Lae Bantuk San* (Business Letters and Memos) by Savangvarorose, B. (1997) – used in a Business English writing course for CU undergraduate students in the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy
2. *Business English Communication* by Olanvoravuth, N. (1999) – used in a Business English communication course for TU undergraduate students in the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy
3. *Modern Business Correspondence* by McComas, D.C. and Satterwhite, M.L. (1993) – used in a Business English communication course for NIDA postgraduate students in the School of Language and Communication

The first textbook is written in Thai with English examples and exercises. The author, Savangvarorose, who is a Thai lecturer of Business English, divides the book into 3 sections: 1) general features of business letters (formats, characteristics of business language, strategies for effective letter writing), 2) different types of frequently used business correspondence (letters of request and inquiry, order letters, letters of

complaint and adjustment, debt collection letters, application letters and social-business letters such as invitation and goodwill), and 3) business memo and report writing. She mostly uses artificial examples created to represent real-life correspondence in the Thai business context. Surprisingly, she does not include letters of sales promotion in this study.

The second textbook is written in purely English by another Thai lecturer. Olanvoravuth (1999) combines some basic business communication concepts with writing instructions and techniques for business letters, memos, reports, minutes of meeting, and telexes, each of which is represented in different sections or chapters. Business letters include letters of information, sales promotion, apology, refusal, debt collecting, and request for credit/payment/refund. Like in Savangvarorose (1997), most examples are artificial and reflective of local and international business within the Thai context. For example, the writers are typically Thai and write to either Thai or foreign readers.

The last textbook is co-written by two American authors. It is divided into 4 main parts: 1) principles of good letter writing, 2) writing effective memos and reports, 3) writing effective business letters, and 4) employment communication. McComas and Satterwhite (1993:v) state, 'The primary objective of this book is to help you develop the ability to plan and write successful business letters, memos, and informal reports – the keys to efficient, productive business operations. The materials have been carefully selected to present the fundamentals of business writing logically, clearly, and completely'. They provide guidelines and examples of various types of business letters including request, order, goodwill, sales, credit and collection, and claim and adjustment letters, as well as the 'replies to' the above-mentioned types of letters. Their samples consist of authentic and artificial letters, both of which reflect the American business context whereby the writers and readers are mainly American.



The sources of their authentic samples are always acknowledged (e.g. ‘Courtesy of the Quaker Oats Company’, *ibid*:135).

My main focus here is to investigate the similarities and differences between samples of persuasive letters (both artificial and authentic) in those textbooks and the real-life letters in my corpus. The three textbooks are prescriptive, with step-by-step guidelines illustrated with ‘model’ phrases and expressions. They generally provide either one or two full examples of each type of letter including persuasive letters. In the next section, a comparison will be made between American and Thai samples of persuasive correspondence. It should be noted that I will only look at sales promotion, request and invitation letters, and that it is not my aim to compare the materials and methods among those three textbooks. A few relevant issues from the textbooks concerning guidelines and techniques in writing these three types of persuasive correspondence may be included in the discussion.

**8.2 Investigating Persuasive Correspondence in Textbooks**

In this section, three pairs of persuasive letters (i.e. sales promotion, request and invitation letters respectively) are presented and discussed in terms of their move structure, textual features, politeness strategies and rhetorical appeals. A comparison to the findings from my corpus presented in Chapters 4-7 will also be made where applicable.

**8.2.1 Letters of sales promotion**

**Sample 8.1: American Textbook’s Sales Promotion Letter (TXSNT)**

Motorola Inc.  October 8, 19--  Mr. Charles H. Gold One Logan Terrace Court Palatine, IL 60067
--

Good Morning:	
Your business demands a great deal of you. Your time is limited. Your decisions are often critical. When you need answers, you need them NOW.	<b>Move 1 Establishing credentials</b> <i>(Addressing the interest/need of the customer)</i>
MOTOROLA understands that...and we can help you put the resources you need within fingertip reach, anywhere you travel. How? Through car telephone service. You can maintain constant contact with your office and important clients and you can make those necessary decisions and meet those crucial deadlines...from the convenience and privacy of your own car.	<b>Move 1 Establishing credentials</b> <i>(Opening a link &amp; offering to fulfill the customer's need)</i> <b>Move 2(i) Offering the product or service</b> <b>Move 2(ii) Essential detailing of the offer</b>  <b>Move 2(iii) Indicating value of the offer</b>
Literally thousands of executives, just like you, are using car telephone service every day to improve their business by converting wasted travel time into productive travel time.	     <b>Move 2(iii) Indicating value of the offer</b>
Give me a call today at (517) 472-5536, or fill out and return the enclosed reply card. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have and to provide you with a personal demonstration on the cost savings of a car telephone.	     <b>Move 5 Soliciting response</b>
Don't let another day go by. Call today and stay in touch tomorrow.	     <b>Move 6 Using (mild) pressure tactics</b>
Sincerely,	
MOTOROLA Communications and Electronics, Inc. Jeff Loomis Personal Communication Representative Mobile Telephone Sales	
dmc Enclosure	     <b>Move 4 Enclosing documents</b>
Communications Sector 1301 E. Algonquin Rd., Schaumburg, Illinois 60196 (312) 397-1000	
Courtesy of Motorola Communications Sector	McComas and Satterwhite (1993:213)

### Sample 8.2: Thai Textbook's Sales Promotion Letter (TXSTH)

Boon & Sara Company Flat B-2 8/F Ever Green 43 Stubbs Road, Hong Kong.	
June 1996	
Dear Customer:	
The highest compliment our company and its staff can receive is to earn your trust and confidence. This is currently being demonstrated by so many of our customers seeking our advice and counsel regarding the setting up and administration of their new investment plans and existing investment accounts. Responding to such requests, we are offering a new Market Timing Service. May I suggest that you review the enclosed brochure. I believe this service will provide substantial long-term and profitable benefits. We have carefully designed the service as a complete investment program.	<b>Opening a link</b>     <b>Move 1 Establishing credentials</b> <i>(Highlighting the company's success/expertise)</i>  <b>Move 2(i) Offering the product or service</b> <b>Move 4 Enclosing documents</b>  <b>Move 2(iii) Indicating value of the offer</b>



To update your file, I am also enclosing a new and simplified rate card. The new commission rate formula is much easier to compute, and the commission rates have been reduced substantially. Our rate schedule remains among the most competitive in the discount industry.

**Move 4 Enclosing documents**

**Move 2(ii) Essential detailing of the offer**  
**Move 2(iii) Indicating value of the offer**

Thank you for selecting us as your broker and for your many personal referrals.

**Move 7 Ending politely**

Please drop by our office or call if you have further questions. We look forward to serving you.

**Move 5 Soliciting response**  
**Move 7 Ending politely**

Sincerely,  
Malee  
President

JKW/ks  
Enclosures (2)

**Move 4 Enclosing documents**

Olanvoravuth (1999:106)

Sample 8.1 (TXSNT) is an authentic letter which McComas and Satterwhite (1993) regard as an effective sales letter. Sample 8.2 (TXSTH) is not authentic, but according to Olanvoravuth (1999), it represents suitable persuasion which is the main purpose of this type of letter. I have applied Bhatia's (1993) pattern of moves here so that this analysis is in line with the analysis of authentic corpus in Chapter 4. In TXSNT, there is a strong 'you-orientation'. The writer starts with Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, by indicating his perception of the need/interest of the potential customer and saying that his company understands and can fulfill such need/interest. Then Move 2, *Introducing the offer*, follows, starting from 2(i), 2(ii) to 2(iii) respectively. The last paragraph mildly represents Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*. There is no Move 3, *Offering incentives*, nor Move 7, *Ending politely* in this letter.

TXSTH tends to employ a combination of we- and you-orientations. We can see that Bhatia's (1993) Move 1, *Establishing Credentials*, is not applicable for the first sentence. In 4.5.1, I proposed to call the first move 'Opening a link', in which one of the functions is 'expressing flattery'. This is how the writer of TXSTH starts the letter. Then she moves on to highlight the expertise and achievements of the company, which is '*Establishing credentials*'. Move 2, *Introducing the offer*, and

Move 4, *Enclosing documents*, then follow. Move 7, *Ending politely*, is realised through the expression of thankfulness and the clause ‘We look forward to serving you’. Move 4, *Enclosing documents*, also appears at the end of the letter under ‘Enclosures (2)’ – which means there are 2 documents attached. As in TXSNT, Move 3, *Offering incentives*, is not found. We can also see that TXSTH does not have Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*.

The above findings on rhetorical moves seem to confirm the findings from my real-life corpus of authentic letters of sales promotion. Some interesting points are as follows:

- 1) Move 3, *Offering incentives*, which Bhatia (1993) considers as cultural (commonly used locally in Southeast Asia), is not found in TXSTH – which confirms my findings that this move is uncommon and should not be considered as cultural because no TH letter in my corpus has such move at all.
- 2) Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*, does not occur in TXSTH here, which supports my previous findings of an infrequent use of this move in the TH letters, and a more frequent use in the NT letters (which is true as TXSNT above exhibits mild pressure tactics by saying ‘*Don’t let another day go by. Call today and stay in touch tomorrow*’).
- 3) Move 7, *Ending politely*, which Bhatia (1993) found in every letter in his analysis, does not appear in TXSNT – which matches my previous findings that report only 50% usage in the NT letters.

Regarding the textual features and politeness strategies, my corpus reveals that the NT letters make less use of the politeness marker ‘please’ and expressions of thanks, which are regarded as negative-politeness strategies. This is also prevalent in TXSNT in which the writer uses a number of imperative clauses without ‘please’ nor any mitigator at all; and there is no expression of thanks either. On the contrary, TXSTH, like most TH letters in my corpus, uses both the politeness marker ‘please’ and expression of thanks. The ‘bald’ imperatives in TXSNT may be perceived by Thais as too pushy or impolite. The first sentence in TXSTH is another negative-politeness



strategy because it expresses self-effacement. This type of expression can sometimes be regarded as excessive politeness, or as what McComas and Satterwhite (1993:40) call 'gushiness'. It can be seen as a flattery. According to McComas and Satterwhite (1993:40-41), gushiness and flattery (as well as bragging and overhumility) should be avoided when writing business letters. Savangvarorose (1997) and Olavoravuth (1999) do not point out this issue, but stress that business letters in general should show sincerity, cordiality and appropriate politeness.

Positive-politeness strategy is found in the beginning of the second paragraph in TXSNT whereby the writer treats the reader as an in-group member with shared interests whom he understands and cares for. It is noticeable that the negative politeness (e.g. 'please', expression of thanks, self-effacement and passive voice) is predominant in TXSTH whereas the positive politeness (expression of solidarity and shared interests) is stressed in TXSNT.

The rhetorical appeals are somewhat intriguing. Interestingly, *pathos* is obvious in TXSNT in which the writer is 'looking at the text from the readers' perspective, addressing their situation, empathizing with their values, and directly inviting them to respond'. (Hyland 1998:238) My previous findings reveal that *pathos* is mostly found in the AMEX letters, and is infrequent in the NT or TH letters. As explained earlier, *ethos* can be compared to Move 1, *Establishing credentials*, which is found in both TXSTH and TXSNT here. Both letters also express *logos* or logical appeals in convincing the reader to buy their product or service. Mild *pathos* is found in TXSTH when the writer emotionally appeals for the reader's response by saying '*We look forward to serving you*'. In sum, the two samples from textbooks show the combination of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, which is different from the findings in my corpus in which most TH and NT sales promotion letters tend to use *logos* more extensively than *ethos* and *pathos*.

8.2.2 Letters of Request

Sample 8.3: American Textbook’s Request Letter (TXRNT)

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Office of the Dean  
College of Business  
P.O. Box 970  
State University, Arkansas 72467  
TELEPHONE 501/972-3035 JONESBORO

October 8, 19--

Dear Alumni:

The College of Business is conducting a survey of our alumni in an attempt to obtain information which will assist in improving the quality of our academic programs and thereby benefit our current and future students. The information received from you will aid us in identifying the kinds of activities in which our graduates are involved and the progress they have made in their professions, including salary attainment.

In addition, our Academic Program Review Committee can benefit from information from former students regarding the strengths and weaknesses of our programs as well as suggestions for improving them.

The individual information collected will be held in confidence and released only in the form of college and department summary statistics. My staff and I eagerly await your reply. Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope by November 20.

Sincerely,

Signature

L.E. Talbert, Dean  
College of Business

Ss  
Enclosure

Courtesy of Arkansas State University

McComas and Satterwhite (1993:156)

Sample 8.4: Thai Textbook’s Request Letter (TXRTH)

Dear Sirs,

We have been informed by the Chamber of Commerce in Thailand that Ward Company manufactures various types of calculators which are famous for their efficiency and well known all over the world. Our company, Thai Electronics, would like to act as the sole distributor of your products in Thailand.

Thai Electronics is one of the best known trading companies in Thailand. We are a distributor of NEC electric appliances from Japan, and of Montgomery electronics from the USA.

We would appreciate it if you would consider our proposal to act as your sole distributor in Thailand. We would be grateful if you would suggest terms and supply other information necessary for a distributor of your products.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Savangvarorose (1997:54)



As discussed in Chapter 5, letters of request in my corpus are context-dependent and vary according to the types of requests required; thus, instead of move analysis, I have followed Yli-Jokipii (1994) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) in identifying request letters in terms of their structural representation consisting of salutation, introduction/background information/reference, pre-request, request, post-request, complimentary close and signature. TXRTH makes a reference to the source of information, which is a rather typical Thai way of opening a letter especially for a new business contact. Then the writer indicates the purpose, which can be considered as a pre-request. The second paragraph concerns the introduction to the writer's company. The two main requests come in the third paragraph in the conditional form with expressions of appreciation and gratitude. The last paragraph is the post-request which indicates the writer's anticipation for the reader's reply.

TXRNT begins with the background information which explains the purpose of the letter. This sample is interesting in that the request is rather implicit because the writer does not directly ask the reader to fill in the survey form. He tends to assume that the reader knows what to do, and thus goes on to emphasize the benefits, and finally requests the reader to return the survey within a specific date. The post-request '*My staff and I eagerly await your reply*' indicates the writer's strong anticipation.

The structural representation of TXRTH is similar to that of the TH corpus. It has a pre-request, a delayed introduction of purpose (i.e. main requests appear in the third paragraph), and a post-request. It exhibits elements of politeness and deference, which are the characteristics found in most TH request letters in my corpus. TXRNT, on the other hand, seems different from the NT corpus because of its implicit request. In similar NT letters with this type of request, the writers often ask the reader directly to complete the form or questionnaire. However, TXRNT writer uses a post-request and does ask the reader to return the survey, which is similar to the NT letters. In

choosing this letter as a model McComas and Satterwhite (1993:155) state that it ‘shows how a persuasive letter can effectively capture the interest and secure the cooperation of the reader with its approach and its use of the “you” attitude’. In contrast, TXRTH seems to use more we-orientation.

As for the textual features and politeness strategies, both TXRNT and TXRTH have some similarities with my request corpus. For example, they use positive-politeness strategy through expressions of shared interests or benefits which represent solidarity. Like my corpus, negative-politeness strategies are more predominant, and more variety is found in TXRTH, which supports my findings about the TH corpus. TXRTH use a combination of hedging (delayed introduction of requests), passive voice (in the first sentence), expression of appreciation and expression of gratitude (in the third paragraph) – which mitigate the tone of the requests and imply deference and self-effacement. Unlike many TH letters, ‘please kindly’ is not found in this sample.

TXRNT also uses some negative-politeness strategies such as passive voice and the politeness marker ‘please’ (see the last paragraph). As mentioned earlier, this sample seems to have an implicit main request, so it is rather different from the findings in my NT corpus in which many letters use either ‘baldly on record’ strategy (through ‘need’ and ‘wish’ statements) or imperative requests with or without ‘please’. There is no expression of thanks in TXRNT. This is not new, but it is somewhat uncommon as many NT letters in my corpus include expressions of thanks or gratitude either in the main request (e.g. the conditional form ‘I/We would be grateful if...’) or in the post-request.

The lack of expression of thanks can make the letter sound impolite to the Thai reader. Savangvarorose (1997:51) includes ‘polite ending’ in her guidelines for good request letter writing. Interestingly, these guidelines or principles tend to reflect the characteristics of the TH letters of request in my corpus; e.g. giving background



information and/or making reference to the source of contact, i.e. where the writer hears about the reader's company (if it involves building a new business relationship), providing explanation or rational behind the request, and using polite ending. Savangvarorose (1997:53) also states that using passive voice in requests can soften the tone of the letter, e.g. '*Your prompt attention would be appreciated*'.

Meanwhile, McComas and Satterwhite (1993:155-158) make five suggestions in writing a persuasive request as follows:

1. Begin with something that will interest the reader
2. Follow through with the reason for the request, emphasize an advantage to someone other than the writer, compliment the reader
3. State the request in definite and specific terms
4. Stimulate action with closing remarks
5. Reflect an optimistic outlook

Note that they do not include polite ending here. TXRNT tends to follow these suggestions. Its closing remarks aims at stimulating the reader's action ('Please return the survey...').

We can see that the approaches in request writing between the two textbooks are different. The differences are reflected in TXRNT and TXRTH. In summary, there are more similarities in TXRTH and my TH corpus than in TXRNT and my NT corpus in general.

The findings on the rhetorical appeals here tend to support my previous findings in which *logos* is predominant in the NT letters whereas a combination of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* is used in the TH letters. TXRNT represents a strong logical or rational appeal expressed through a series of explanations of benefits. TXRTH, on the other hand, first creates *pathos* by acknowledging the success of the products of the reader's company; and makes a logical appeal or *logos* by stating its purpose ('*would like to*

*act as the sole distributor of your products in Thailand*’). Then in the second paragraph, the writer introduces *ethos* by establishing credibility of his/her company. Interestingly, TXRNT emphasizes what McComas and Satterwhite (1993:156) call ‘altruistic appeal’ which focuses on benefits to others. This shows collectivism or collaborative image similar to that typically found in my TH corpus.

8.2.3 Letters of Invitation

Sample 8.5: American Textbook’s Invitation Letter (TXINT)

Dear Mr. Hoggatt:	
Mr. Allen is inviting the members of the Restoration Committee for the Southern Aire Opera House to meet with him for lunch on Friday, June 8, at the Venice Garden Italian restaurant at 12 noon. He would like very much for you to come.	Move 1 Inviting Move 3 Detailing
Mr. Allen would like the committee to discuss specific suggestions for the fund-raiser to be held in October.	Move 5 Anticipating acceptance Move 1 Establishing the context (Stating purpose)
Will you please let us know by Monday morning whether you will be able to attend the luncheon and meeting?	Move 4 Soliciting response
Sincerely yours,	
Signature	
Lucy Monroe Assistant to Mr. Allen	

McComas and Satterwhite (1993:147)

Sample 8.6: Thai Textbook’s Invitation Letter (TXITH)

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Johnson,	
The Central Cosmetics Company cordially invites you to a party to launch a new brand of perfume, “Poison” from Dior, for which we are the sole distributor in Thailand. The party will be held in the Wipavadee Room at the Central Hotel on Friday, March 17.	Move 1 Inviting Move 2 Establishing the context (Stating purpose & Giving background information) Move 3 Detailing
Cocktails will be served at 7:00 p.m., followed by an introduction to “Poison” by Mr. Jean Paul from the Dior Company in France. Free samples of “Poison” will be presented to each guest. There will also be a program of entertainment until 10:00 p.m. All the guests are representatives from leading department stores in Bangkok.	Move 3 Detailing Move 2 Establishing the context (Giving background information)
We sincerely hope you can attend. I would appreciate it if I could have your reply by March 10.	Move 5 Anticipating acceptance Move 4 Soliciting response
Sincerely,	

Savangvarorose (1997:148)



The rhetorical moves in both TXINT and TXITH above are similar to those found in my invitation corpus. They consist of obligatory moves; that is, Move 1, *Inviting*, and Move 3, *Detailing*. Move 2, *Establishing the context*, is considered optional. It is found in 76% of the NT letters and 60% of the TH letters. Both samples above contain this move. Move 4, *Soliciting response* is found in the last sentence of both TXINT and TXITH. Move 5, *Anticipating acceptance* is also used by both samples. This supports what I mentioned earlier in Chapter 6 that although these two moves are optional, each letter of invitation always has either Move 4 or Move 5, or both. We can see that both TXINT and TXITH do not have Move 6, *Expressing thanks*. It is not surprising because only 5% of my real-life corpus have this move.

Like my previous findings, positive-politeness strategy is used in both samples. The writers treat the readers as in-group members (e.g. ‘*Mr Allen is inviting the members of... + He would like very much for you to come*’ in TXINT, and ‘*All the guests are representatives from leading department stores in Bangkok*’ in TXITH) and tend to express shared interests or mutual benefits with the readers. This is considered as a positive politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson (1987). ‘Baldly on record’ invitations are used, which is again similar to my corpus, as this type of letters is not face-threatening when compared to request or sales promotion letters.

Negative politeness strategies are found more extensively in TXITH. They include the occasional use of the company’s name, passive voice (‘*The party will be held...*’, ‘*Cocktails will be served...*’, ‘*Free samples of Poison will be presented...*’), and expression of appreciation (‘*I would appreciate it if I could have your reply by March 10*’), which indicates self-effacement. TXINT only use one negative politeness strategy, that is, the politeness marker ‘please’ in the modal-initial interrogative ‘*Will you please let us know..*’, which softens the tone of the request. We can see that TXITH provides more details of the event and tends to promote more collaborative image than TXINT, which supports my previous findings.

Regarding the rhetorical appeals, TXINT seems brief and to the point presumably because it is written on behalf of another person. *Logos* is predominant here although some *pathos* is shown in the sentence ‘*He would like very much for you to come*’. The TXITH is more cordial and tends to use a combination of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. *Logos* lies in the reason for the invitation; *ethos* is realised through the detailed description of the event; and *pathos* is found in the writer’s strong anticipation for the reader’s participation (‘*We sincerely hope you can attend*’). These findings are rather similar to those in my invitation corpus.

In conclusion, each pair of the persuasive letters from the three textbooks reveals a great deal of differences. This supports my findings in Chapters 4 – 7 which report on the structural, textual and cultural differences between the NT and TH letters. The authentic samples from McComas and Satterwhite (1993) can be compared to the NT corpus whereas the samples from Savangvarorose (1997) and Olanvoravuth (1999) can be compared to the TH corpus. Although the latter contains artificial letters, it reflects many characteristics similar to those found in the TH corpus. We can see that the TXSNT, TXRNT and TXINT above demonstrate some differences from the TXSTH, TXRTH and TXITH especially in terms of politeness strategies and rhetorical appeals. It seems apparent that both Thai textbooks provide samples of persuasive correspondence which generally reflect a typical Thai persuasive writing style found in my authentic TH corpus.

The three textbooks include sections on grammar and vocabulary relative to business communication, which can be used as reference or checklist for the learners. In the next section, I will point out the lexico-grammatical errors found in my corpus of authentic business correspondence, and examine the extent to which those errors are represented in their vocabulary and grammar sections of the three selected textbooks.



## 8.3 Lexico-grammatical Errors

Difficulties in second language teaching and learning have long been a subject of interest for language scholars and researchers who have analysed the types of errors that L2 learners make and attempted to identify their causes. Error analysis was extensively studied especially in late 1960s and early 1970s. (e.g. Corder 1967, 1971; Selinker 1972; Richard 1973) Most studies reveal that interference from the native or L1 language is one of the major causes of errors. Although this topic is not the focus of my research, the corpus of cross-cultural business correspondence is a practically useful source for investigation of lexico-grammatical and stylistic errors made by Thai business professionals.

### 8.3.1 Data Classification and Analysis

It should be noted that all correspondence texts in my corpus were selected and sent to me from a number of Thai offices on their voluntary basis. Although they are natural and real-life data, the selection process depends only on the participating companies. As business correspondence represents the company's image, it may be true that those participating companies have carefully selected their samples of business correspondence. Apparently, the correspondence texts I received are generally well-written and of good quality. In this section I will make use of the entire corpus excluding those written by Non-Thai-Non-Native-English speakers (NTNS). Thus the overall data consist of 522 correspondence texts (301 TH and 221 NT). The NT corpus was analysed first. Only 9 errors (4%), which are mostly slips or spelling/typing mistakes, are found in 221 NT letters (e.g. 'avaailable' in NT586, 'personaly' in NT477, 'quiet well' [instead of 'quite well'] in NT274). Therefore, I will not discuss them further and will focus only on the TH corpus. It is interesting that the number of TH correspondence texts which contain at least one error is only 109, which accounts for 36% of the TH group.

For the analysis procedure, as there can be more than one error within one sentence, I will record one error at a time. For example, I consider the sentence ‘*Congratulation in your new job!*’ (TH207) as having 2 errors: ‘(1) *Congratulation\_* [Congratulations] (2) *in* [on] your new job!’. This is to make sure that each error counts as one unit in order to facilitate the classification system. In doing so, from the 109 TH correspondence texts, there are 209 errors in total. Note that my analysis is data-driven; and the classification scheme is based on the types of the errors found in this corpus.

I adopted some error categories from Ubol’s (1981) work on error analysis of English compositions by Thai students. Ubol (1981) examined two main groups of data: 1) 150 samples of free composition written by Thai first-year university students; 2) 130 samples of English translation from the Thai language (100 by first-year students, and 30 by third-year students). His findings reveal that Thai students of the same age and academic level make different patterns of written English errors when they write Group 1) as opposed to those of Group 2) when they translate from a pre-arranged Thai text. It is also shown that third-year students make fewer errors than first-year students. The objective of Ubol’s (1981) study is primarily pedagogical, aiming at developing awareness of common errors among university teachers in order to help them plan effective writing courses. Another interesting point is his comment that ‘Some of the most frequent errors made by Thai students arise from mother tongue interference’. (ibid:1) I will examine if the errors found in business correspondence reveal similar findings or not.

The classification scheme developed for the present analysis consists of 14 main categories, each of which has one or more sub-categories. These main error categories are listed here in accordance with their frequency (in descending order): verb, preposition, determiner, noun, incomplete structure, agreement, spelling/typing error, adjective, run-on (fused) sentence, word order, pronoun, adverb, tense, and



punctuation respectively. The data analysis is presented in Table 8.1 below, listing all categories and sub-categories in the above order, and providing some statistics and examples. In this table, a specific error in each example is underlined. The adjacent terms in brackets are the corrections of those errors. The term ‘(sic.)’ is used when an example has another type(s) of error, which is not the focus of its current designated classification.

Table 8.1: Category of lexico-grammatical errors

Category	No.	Sub-category	No. of errors	Example
1. Verb (46) 22.01%	1.1	Wrong form of verbs	19	She is very glad <u>to has</u> [have] a good chance of ... (TH522)
	1.2	Omission of necessary auxiliary verbs	9	We very much regret that we <u>will</u> [be] <u>unable</u> to accept your kind invitation owing to a previous engagement. (TH381)
	1.3	Wrong selection: verbs for nouns	4	We await your decision and <u>advise</u> [advice]. (TH449)
	1.4	Wrong lexical selection	3	I <u>recall</u> you my mail of the 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 99 and ... (TH456)
	1.5	Omission of necessary modal verbs	3	I [would] <u>highly appreciate</u> if you [could] <u>spare</u> a little of your precious time with us. (TH025)
	1.6	Wrong selection: verbs for adjectives	2	I may be too <u>worry</u> [worried]. (TH246)
	1.7	Wrong selection: verbs for -ing clause as adverbials	2	<u>Refer</u> [Referring] to your questions of our Instrument Cluster Quote, ... (TH136)
	1.8	Wrong selection: verbs for conjunctions	1	I'm asking <u>caused</u> [because] I've seen yesterday Khun Ann ... (TH301)
	1.9	Omission of necessary verbs in phrasal verbs	1	Please be informed that Mr. X, Chairman of Y Bank, who will travel with the Royal party, <u>will direct contact with</u> [will make direct contact with] Mr. Z, ... (TH027)
	1.10	Unnecessary insertion of verbs	1	Thank you for your <u>pay</u> attention and assistance on this matter, which will be very high (sic.) appreciated. (TH134)
	1.11	Overmarking of simple past	1	The models of aircrafts now <u>didn't purchased</u> , it only displayed on our company exhibitions. (TH181)
2. Preposition (40) 19.14%	2.1	Wrong selection of prepositions	19	We write to your esteem (sic.) office in regard <u>of</u> [to] request ... (TH419)
	2.2	Overmarking or unnecessary insertion of prepositions	13	Regarding <u>to</u> the Agenda 3, we will discuss in BKK, please bring ... (TH140)
	2.3	Omission of necessary prepositions	8	<u>Thanks</u> [for] your interest in our products ... (TH457)

3. Determiner (34) 16.27%	3.1	Omission of necessary determiners	24	We will look forward to hearing [a] <u>favourable response</u> from you .... (TH418)
	3.2	Wrong selection: second-person possessive determiners for second-person pronouns	4	I hope <u>your</u> [you] find the enclosed information useful to your work. (TH354)
	3.3	Wrong selection: indefinite for definite articles	1	This is <u>an</u> [the] earliest we can due to our production. (TH127)
	3.4	Wrong selection: definite for indefinite articles	1	Therefore, <u>the</u> [a] further [next] step kindly contact to ( <i>sic.</i> ) him. (TH117)
	3.5	Wrong selection: first-person plural possessive determiners for definite articles	1	For tooling, we would confirm same price since it is <u>our</u> [the] lowest we could find at this moment. (TH136)
	3.6	Wrong selection: definite article for the term 'It is'	1	We understand <u>the</u> [it is] very important that EGAT be represented at this Asian event ... (TH200)
	3.7	Overmarking of the articles	1	Due to Kodak film is <u>an the</u> [the] official film recording for 13 <sup>th</sup> ASIAN GAMES... (TH247)
4. Noun (19) 9.09%	4.1	Wrong noun form: singular for plural	8	Many <u>thank[s]</u> for your continued support to Turismo Thai Co., Ltd. (TH327)
	4.2	Wrong noun form: plural for singular	5	All <u>staffs</u> [staff] are expatriates. (TH405)
	4.3	Wrong selection: nouns for verbs	4	According to your fax ..., we would like to <u>response</u> [respond] for ( <i>sic.</i> ) your concerns as follows. (TH135)
	4.4	Wrong selection: nouns for adjectives	1	I sincerely regret to inform you that I will not able ( <i>sic.</i> ) to attend the subject Congress due to the <u>importance</u> [important] and unavoided ( <i>sic.</i> ) mission during that period. (TH211)
	4.5	Wrong lexical selection	1	Under the existing circumstances, it is our policy to refrain from any new JV project development especially in this region until the situation changes at a future <u>timing</u> [time]. (TH236)
5. Incomplete Structure (16) 7.66%	5.1	Fragments	10	With reference to the meeting yesterday. (TH301)
	5.2	Omission of subjects	3	Regarding the USA market, due to ( <i>sic.</i> ) America is the world's largest producer of processed sweet corn, _ [it] has its own production and prices, so we supply none to USA. (TH454)
	5.3	Omission of main verbs	2	Please note that this offer _ [is] valid till end ( <i>sic.</i> ) of this month... (TH459)
	5.4	Omission of obligatory objects	1	However, we've requested him to send _ [it] again today by telefax. (TH119)
6. Agreement (14) 6.70%	6.1	Subject-Verb agreement	11	The draft of his presentation <u>are</u> [is] as follows: (TH168)



7. Spelling or Typing error (12) 5.74%	6.2	Determiner-Noun agreement	3	We do hope that <u>this [these]above</u> <u>operation procedures</u> are cleared ( <i>sic.</i> ) and understanding ( <i>sic.</i> ), ... (TH138)
	7.1	Errors presumably caused by carelessness such as typing mistakes	12	Refer to ( <i>sic.</i> ) our meeting <u>ealier</u> [earlier], my web site has just been finished. (TH496)
8. Adjectives (10) 4.78%	8.1	Wrong form or lexical selection	6	Hope our product will be <u>satisfied</u> [satisfactory] for your exporting. (TH558)
	8.2	Wrong selection: adjectives for nouns	3	Thank you very much in advance for your kind <u>assistant</u> [assistance] and support. (TH421)
	8.3	Wrong selection: adjectives for adverbs	1	Thank you for your pay ( <i>sic.</i> ) attention and assistance on this matter, which will be very <u>high</u> [highly] appreciated. (TH134)
9. Run-on (Fused) Sentence (5) 2.39%	9.1	Run-on (Fused) Sentences	5	<u>Moreover, the shipment of 1 Dec. we are</u> <u>facing for deliver of Glove Box Lid, due</u> <u>to AAT no returned for the totes to VTL</u> <u>and we expected to get and deliver these</u> <u>parts after AAT built the vehicles</u> <u>consequently, so that we are able to ship</u> <u>for the following day.</u> (TH134)
10. Word Order (3) 1.44%	10.1	Word Order	3	According to the 13 <sup>th</sup> ASIAN GAMES will be held in Thailand during ... and Kodak was selected to be the official film for this, I would like to invite you and your subordinates to work for our activities during December 1 –22'1998 ( <u>Before Games start 5 days</u> ). (TH248) => [5 days before the Games start.]
11. Pronoun (3) 1.44%	11.1	Overmarking of unnecessary insertion of pronouns	2	Regarding your e-mail to Khun Celia date ( <i>sic.</i> ) April 24, 00 which you have request ( <i>sic.</i> ) <u>us</u> the schedule of new rates <u>that</u> considered incompetitive. (TH301)
	11.2	Omission of necessary relative pronouns	1	May I take this opportunity to further introduce Ms. Suphatra, Counsellor of the Division of International Economics, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, __ [who] was working closely with Mrs. Busaya during the past few years. (TH371)
12. Adverb (3) 1.44%	12.1	Wrong lexical selection	1	Kindly return to us as <u>earliest</u> [soon] as possible. (TH153)
	12.2	Wrong selection: adverbs for adjectives	1	I would like to suggest a <u>simply</u> [simple] reply to make it clear to our clients. (TH178)
	12.3	Overmarking or unnecessary insertion of adverbs	1	Due to ( <i>sic.</i> ) Kodak film is an the ( <i>sic.</i> ) official film recording for 13 <sup>th</sup> ASIAN GAMES, <u>therefore</u> , to promote and build up awareness our brand image to the public in this occasion.
13. Tense (2) 0.96%	13.1	Tense shifts	2	We <u>did</u> something of the same to Bureau of the Royal Household when we <u>need</u> [needed] to publish the pictures of the King in our journals. (TH270)

14. Punctuation (2) 0.96%	14.1	Misplaced comma	1	<u>In addition, to</u> [In addition to, ]advancing commercial needs and interests, the 5 <sup>th</sup> Scientific Conference of the Asian Societies of Cosmetic Scientists will concentrate on ...(TH353)
	14.2	Omission of necessary comma	1	Therefore, the further step kindly contact to him. ( <i>sic.</i> ) (TH117) [ Therefore, as a next step, kindly (or please) contact him.]

8.3.2 Discussion of Common Errors

As shown in Table 8.1, the top three types of errors found in my corpus are verb (22%), preposition (19%), and determiner (16%). In this section, I will focus on these types of errors and also highlight some other interesting errors before moving on to see whether the selected textbooks provide grammar reference to reduce or prevent the likely occurrence of lexico-grammatical errors.

8.3.2.1 ‘Verb’ and verb-related errors

Errors concerning ‘verb’ are the most frequently found in my corpus. This can probably be explained by the fact that, unlike English verbs, Thai verbs cannot be conjugated. In her study of verb-tense error in English writing by Thai students, Ratanakul (2000:79) states, ‘In English, tenses are indicated by verb forms which have to be changed according to tenses. On the other hand, in Thai, tenses are instead indicated by adverbs of time and aspect markers.’ She reports some difficulties that Thai students have in writing English especially the use of correct tenses, which supports Ubol’s (1981) findings. Both reveal that interference from the mother tongue is an important cause as there is no inflection in Thai; and Thai verbs can represent the past, present or future tenses depending on the context. Having this in mind, it is not surprising that there are different types of errors in verbs (Category 1.1), and other verb-related errors such as subject-verb agreement (Category 6.1) and tense shifts (Category 13.1), even in well-written TH letters in my corpus.



‘Wrong form of verbs’ is the most frequently found type of ‘verbs’ errors (19 out of 46 or 41%). It is caused by the following:

1. Disregard of the pattern ‘look forward to + V **-ing**’

This pattern is widely known and is normally included in grammar lessons. Leech (1983:150) regards ‘look forward to’ as an idiom that has to be followed by the –ing form of verb, and includes the common ending of a letter ‘I look forward to hearing from you’ in his example. However, many TH letters use the base form of verb instead of Verb-ing in this idiom, for example,

Thank you for your interest in our company and look forward to hear from you. (TH445)

Looking forward to start mutually beneficial cooperative (*sic.*). (TH453)

We are looking forward to see you again. (TH467)

I am looking forward to hear from you soon. (TH522)

2. Disregard of the rule ‘To + **Base form of verb**’

The example shown in Table 8.1 (Category 1.1) represents this type of error. Some TH writers conjugate a verb when it should not be conjugated. Another example is as follows:

So, may we request you to disregards (cancel) those letter and kindly deliver the parts to AAT according to the original schedule. (TH139)

3. Omission of passive participle verb form (-ed)

As Thai verbs cannot be conjugated, there is no passive participle verb form. This may explain why some Thai writers do not put –ed in the underlined verbs in the following example:

The documents have been prepared in accordance to your letter of invitation forward to us by USAEP Office in Bangkok. (TH111)

Regarding your e-mail to Khun Celia date April 24, 00... (TH301)

Look forward to your kind consideration and please do not hesitate to request further details if require. (TH458)

#### 4. Incorrect use of **-ing** particle

There is only one example here. 'We also manufacturing water tank (*sic.*), Septic tanks and other containers.' (TH554) Instead of using the verb 'manufacture' in the present tense, the writer incorrectly insert the **-ing** particle. This cannot be a present continuous tense because it does not have the auxiliary verb 'be' (e.g. 'we **are** also manufacturing'), and, judging from the context, the correct tense should be the present tense ('we also manufacture...'). This error shows confusion between verb and tense of a Thai writer.

Omission of necessary auxiliary verbs is the second most frequently found type of 'verbs' errors (9 out of 46 or 20%). It is mainly found in the expression 'to be (un)able to'. (see Category 1.2) In Thai, the English adjective 'able' can be compared to the Thai verb 'saamard', which has exactly the same meaning. Therefore, errors occur when Thais translate 'saamard' into English 'able', and treat 'able' as a verb instead of an adjective. This results in the omission of the auxiliary verb 'to be', for example,

Though the themes for this year's conference are very interesting, Mr. Chairman has asked me to express his regret that due to a prior engagement he would not able to attend the Conference. (TH209)

Though I really want to share the time with you, I sincerely regret to inform you that I will not able to attend the Subject Congress ... (TH211)

Note that the omission of the necessary auxiliary verb 'to be' is occasionally found in passive voice (e.g. 'Thanks [for] your fax dated...which \_\_\_ [**was**] well-received and noted' in TH448) and present continuous tense (e.g. I recall (*sic.*) you my mail of... and \_\_\_ [**am**] still waiting [for] your urgent response' in TH456).

In summary, most verb-related errors can be related to the lack of inflection in Thai verbs and incorrect use of some English grammatical rules caused by interference



and/or ignorance. My findings support Ubol's (1981) and Ratanakul's (2000) studies in that interference can occur in terms of verb-tense usage in English writing of Thais.

### 8.3.2.2 '*Preposition*' errors

Kamphang's (1974) study on the Thai use of English prepositions, cited in Ubol (1981), reports that the use English prepositions is one of the most problematic areas for Thai students in general. Ubol's (1981:35) findings show that prepositions of place are the most wrongly used by Thai students (e.g. 'He was killed towards [on] the way to his school'). In my corpus, there are three types of 'preposition' errors: 'wrong selection' (47%), 'overmarking or unnecessary insertion' (33%) and 'omission of necessary prepositions' (20%). The first one mostly concerns the wrong use of prepositions in idioms, for example,

I look forward **in** hearing from you soon. (TH486)

We look forward **in** hearing from you shortly. (TH491)

We look forward **in** hearing from you soon. (TH492)

Also in this type, some incorrect prepositions result from negative transfer from the Thai language, as shown in Category 2.1, and as follows:

ERM has a strong focus **in** providing technical consulting and training programmes.... (TH113)

We write to your esteem (*sic.*) office in regard **of** request the Canned Foods importer List in your area. (TH419)

We would request the Thai office of foreign trade promotion to inform us **for** the importers/buying agents/brokers for the product range mentioned in the catalog. (TH425)

In the second type, Many TH writers incorrectly add the preposition 'to' or 'of' after 'regarding', which is an -ing clause as adverbial commonly used in business correspondence, for example,

Regarding of the increase of authorized capital of STC and ... (TH006)

Regarding to the Agenda 3, we ... (TH140)

Referring to your telephone conversation regarding to the seminar arrangement. (TH319)

Mr. Aram has already contacted us this morning (after I have talked to you on phone (*sic.*), and we are very glad to give you the information for all expences (*sic.*) regarding to Mr. Aram's studying ... (TH519)

As for the third type, omissions of 'for' (as in 'Thank you for...', 'wait for...'), 'to', (as in 'Reference to...', 'do not hesitate to') and 'from' (as in 'hearing from you') are found in my corpus. Although my data do not have incorrect prepositions of place as reported in Ubol (1981), they reveal interesting problems in the use of 'business-related' prepositions by the Thai professionals.

### 8.3.2.3 '*Determiner*' errors

The most frequently found type of 'determiner' errors is the omission of necessary determiners (71%). This includes either the omission of a) definite or b) indefinite articles. Some examples are presented below. Each underlined noun indicates that it needs a determiner.

#### a) Omission of the definite article 'the'

Mr. Shimizu will be person in charge of all the process regarding this matter. (TH117)

For other discussed matters, Bangkok office are now attempting to solve entire problem and will urgently find the best solution for all soon. (TH142)

Please note that this offer valid (*sic.*) till end of this month... (TH459)

Mr. Aram has already contacted us this morning (after I have talked to you on phone)... (TH519)

Thank you for brochures of NERGECO product which ... (TH581)

#### b) Omission of the indefinite article 'a' or 'an' (see also Category 3.1)



During your trip in (*sic.*) BKK, I would like to make appointment for the meeting which will be held on Monday .... (TH140)

Please let me know your schedule so that I can make appointment with the club for you. (TH165)

The problems with determiners can be traced to the fact that the Thai language does not have the system of 'articles'. There are no equivalents in Thai for the articles 'a', 'an', 'the'. The Thai language has one form of demonstrative determiners - that of a singular type similar to English 'this' and 'that' - which is used for both singular and plural nouns. The Thai 'Nee' (this) and 'Nun' (that) are predominantly used in spoken discourse after (not before) a noun only when stress has to be made. This can be related to the incorrect use of determiner-noun agreement in Category 6.2 whereby the singular demonstrative 'this' is used with a plural noun. The 'determiners' errors especially the misuse of articles are found very extensively in Ubol's (1981) data; and he states that the distribution of articles notoriously creates problems for Thai students as we do not have such determiner structure in Thai.

#### **8.3.2.4 Other interesting errors**

There are a few types of errors worth mentioning here. First, the 'noun' errors (see Category 4.1-4.5 for reference) can be explained by two reasons: 1) ignorance or misunderstanding (e.g. the use of 'staffs' instead of 'staff'), and 2) the faulty sound perception which misleads the spelling of some words that sound similar for Thais (e.g. 'thank' for 'thanks', 'response' for 'respond', 'importance' for 'important'). Another example of the latter is 'sale' for 'sell' in the following:

If you are unable to accept the contract rate please deny the request instead of trying to sale the room at the higher rate. (TH178)

Second, errors in incomplete structure especially Categories 5.1 (fragments) and 5.4 (omission of obligatory objects) are interesting in terms of business perspectives.

Fragments lead to incomplete sentences, which are also considered grammatically incorrect. In TH business correspondence, most fragments concern the reference sentence in which the writer wants to make some reference to the previous business matter(s). For example,

Regarding of (*sic.*) the increase of authorized capital of STC and the payment of Land Lease Fee to Chulalongkorn University. (TH006)

With reference to your quotation Request on 13<sup>rd</sup> October 1998. (TH131)

Referring to your telephone conversation regarding to (*sic.*) the seminar arrangement. (TH319)

Further to your telephone conversation with my colleague, Mr. Garry Winstone, yesterday concerning the forth-coming seminar. (TH426)

The above fragments are perhaps acceptable in the business world nowadays due to their (sufficient) content regardless of form. However, interestingly, the 221 NT correspondence texts in my corpus do not have this type of fragment at all. An NT example which resembles TH426 above reads, '*Further to your telephone conversation with Mr. X this afternoon, I would like to inform you that...*' (NT368) We can see that the sentence is complete because it has the main clause 'I would like to...'. Another way of making reference the NT writer uses is, for example, '*Thank you for your letter of January 24 regarding...*' (NT241) Perhaps this is a question of stylistics rather than linguistics. Apart from fragments in reference part, there are also some other fragments. For example, 'As we agreed to provide the price for you by 16<sup>th</sup> October 1998.' (TH131) Again, the main clause is missing. Fragments is the most frequently found sub-category under the category of 'Incomplete Structure' (63%).

The omission of an obligatory object after the transitive verb 'to send' (see Category 5.4) is interesting because this verb is common in business dealings. Although one error is reported here, it should be noted that this is caused by interference of Thai as the verb 'send' in Thai does not always need an object.



Lastly, let us look at the run-on' (fused) sentence. I adopted this term from Ubol (1981) who reports similar errors in his data. He explain, 'Run-on sentence errors are very difficult to tackle because there are so many different types of errors within them. One possible method is to break down the run-on sentences into several simple sentences, using whatever conjunctions that occur as break points. After that, the errors in each simple sentence can be detected quite easily.' (ibid:53) Unlike most errors in my corpus which are grammatically incorrect but understandable, a run-on sentence can lead to confusion and misunderstanding because of its ambiguity and lack of clarity. (see Category 9.1) It also represents inefficiency of the writer in conveying the message to his/her business counterpart. For example,

We apologize that we cannot give MRR parts as many as you requested since those parts were sent to be scrapped shortly before we confirm delivery to you which we just knew that. (TH133)

We already made the understanding to our receiving person to follow this rule, for this case, we have to apologize that our staff has made the confusion to you. (TH135)

So far I have highlighted the main findings on lexico-grammatical errors found in my TH corpus of 301 letters. The next section aims to explore the grammar reference in textbooks to see how they prepare to deal with possible errors that could be made by L2 learners especially Thai.

### **8.3.3 Grammar Reference in Textbooks**

McComas and Satterwhite (1993) provide quite an extensive grammar reference which includes, for example, a number of grammatical rules, punctuation, capitalisation, abbreviation usage, and some frequently misspelled words in business communication. It should be noted that my corpus does not have any problem with capitalisation or abbreviation. Explanations of grammatical rules in this textbook include those of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions,

conjunctions, sentence fragments, run-on sentences and parallel sentence construction. They are normally brief (one or two paragraphs) as this textbook is aimed at native English speakers or advanced learners of Business English. The focus tends to be on American audience as there is a section on the abbreviations of the American states and territories as well as some Canadian provinces. The use of verbs is summarised into verb tenses, agreement of verb with subject, and verbal nouns such as ‘I shall appreciate your sending...’ (ibid:294) The use of prepositions especially those that are preceded by certain lexical items (e.g. ‘interested *in*’) is briefly explained. There is no discussion on the use of determiners (e.g. *a, an, the, this, those*), which is a big problem for Thais. However, this book provides good explanation on sentence fragments (see ibid:21-22) and run-on sentences (ibid:296).

One of the similarities between Savangvarorose (1997) and Olanvoravuth (1999) is that both provide samples of expressions, phrases and sentences for use in different business circumstances. The learners can easily copy those ‘model’ samples and adapt them to suit their contexts. The grammatical rules presented in both textbooks include, for example, those of agreement of subject and verb, sentence fragments, parallelism, comma usage, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and pronouns. Compared to the above American textbook, both textbooks provide more detailed grammatical explanations including those concerning the three most problematic issues in my corpus (verbs, prepositions, and determiners). Both include the use of the idiom ‘look forward to + the –ing form of verb’, a few examples illustrating the verb ‘to send + Object’, and the prepositional phrase ‘with regard + to’. Savangvarorose (1997) gives examples on the use of ‘to be able to’ while Olanvoravuth (1999) clearly explains how to write a reference sentence using ‘Regarding’, ‘With reference/regard or Referring + to’. All these are reported as incorrectly used in my corpus as discussed in 8.3.2.1 to 8.3.2.4 above.



Olanvoravuth (1999) also discusses the use of articles (*a, an, the*) in detail, and mentions the use of ‘Khun’ as cultural term of address in the Thai business context, which will be discussed in the following section. There are lists of ‘use’ and ‘don’t use’ types of words and phrases in Savangvarorose (1997), and sections on vocabulary (business terms, two-word verbs, confusing words) in Olanvoravuth (1999). In summary, it has been demonstrated that these Thai textbooks on business letter writing cover more grammatical reference related to common errors made by Thais or L2 speakers than the American textbook does.

## **8.4 Salutations and Complimentary Closes**

A salutation is an important opening part of a business letter whereas a complimentary close marks the ending of its body message. With my large authentic corpus, it is worth examining cross-cultural salutations and complimentary closes. In order to best examine them, I will only focus on NT and TH letters and faxes, which are the main modes of business correspondence in my corpus. Of all 522 letters and faxes written by Thais and native English speakers, there are 4 letters and 3 faxes in which both salutations and complimentary closes (along with the signatures of the writers) were deleted by the companies in relation to their policy of confidentiality. Therefore, my new corpus for this analysis consists of 515 letters and faxes in total (295 TH and 220 NT). The term ‘N/A’ is used for a small number of letters in which salutations were previously deleted, but complimentary closes are present, and for those in which complimentary closes were deliberately omitted, but salutations are available.

### **8.4.1 Variety of salutations**

Salutation is considered as form of address in business correspondence. A standard salutation typically begins with the word ‘Dear’ as in ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Mr. X’.

There are 25 different salutations (excluding the N/A category) found in my corpus of 515 letters and faxes. They are presented in the following table.

**Table 8.2: Salutations**

Salutations	Total	%Total	TH	%TH	NT	%NT
1. Dear+Title+Surname	124	24.08%	68	23.05%	56	25.45%
2. Dear+Khun+Firstname	70	13.59%	42	14.24%	28	12.73%
3. Dear+Sir	53	10.29%	36	12.20%	17	7.73%
4. Dear+Non-specific Term	49	9.51%	24	8.14%	25	11.36%
5. N/A	33	6.41%	24	8.14%	9	4.09%
6. Dear+Firstname	31	6.02%	16	5.42%	15	6.82%
7. Dear+Title+Firstname	25	4.85%	12	4.07%	13	5.91%
8. Honourific Title	21	4.08%	9	3.05%	12	5.45%
9. Dear+Sir/Madam	19	3.69%	12	4.07%	7	3.18%
10. Dear+Sirs	17	3.30%	8	2.71%	9	4.09%
11. Dear+Honourific Title+Firstname	15	2.91%	11	3.73%	4	1.82%
12. Dear+Title+Firstname+Surname	15	2.91%	11	3.73%	4	1.82%
13. Dear+Honourific Title+Surname	11	2.14%	8	2.71%	3	1.36%
14. Dear+Honourific Title	6	1.17%	0	0.00%	6	2.73%
15. Dear+Title+Honourific Title	6	1.17%	6	2.03%	0	0.00%
16. Dear+Sir or Madam	6	1.17%	1	0.34%	5	2.27%
17. Dear+M.L.+Firstname	3	0.58%	1	0.34%	2	0.91%
18. Dear+Khun+Firstname+Surname	2	0.39%	1	0.34%	1	0.45%
19. Dear+Surname	2	0.39%	2	0.68%	0	0.00%
20. Dear+Firstname+Surname	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
21. Dear+Honourific Title+Firstname+Surname	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
22. Dear+Khun+Surname	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
23. Dear+Kinship Term	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
24. Firstname	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
25. For the attention of+Title+Firstname+Surname	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
26. Sir	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
Total	515	100.00%	295	100.00%	220	100.00%

From the above table, the word ‘Title’ means the standard ‘title(s) of address’ in English, for example, Mr., Mrs., and Ms. Assuming that the terms ‘First name’ and ‘Surname’ is universally understood, I will not explain the salutations such as ‘Dear + Title + First name and/or Surname’ and the like. However, some unusual salutations concerning ‘Khun’ (see #2,18,22 in Table 8.2 above), ‘Honourific Title’(see #8,11,13, 14,15, 21), ‘M.L.’ (see #17), ‘Kinship Term’ (see #23), and ‘Non-specific Term’ (see #4), and are worth clarifying here.

The salutation, Dear + Khun + First name, is used extensively in my corpus. Some westerners who are not familiar with Thai names may think that ‘Khun’ (e.g. Dear



Khun Pranee in NT147) is a first name which is followed by a surname. In fact, ‘Khun’ is a conventional Thai title or term of address used with both male and female, which is equivalent to Mr, Mrs, or Ms. It conveys a sense of respect and formality, and is used in both spoken and written Thai. Senawong (1996:26) explains, ‘In Thai, when it is necessary to address a person with his/her first name, the addressee has to put a title in front of the name. Apart from occupational titles and kin terms, a polite title Khun is commonly used, for example, Khun Mali, etc.’ In the social-business context, ‘Khun’ can be followed by a nickname especially in spoken discourse. In Thai business correspondence, ‘Khun’ is widely used when addressing or referring to a Thai person. It is always followed by a first name, except, in a lesser extent, when one’s surname needs to be specified, it then appears in the form of ‘Khun + First Name + Surname’. When Thais write a letter in English, they tend to use ‘Khun’ instead of Mr or Mrs when addressing to a Thai person. For example, ‘For more information, please call Khun Dhanu or Khun Ornanong at 251-6596-9 today.’ (TH012) This trend is essentially cultural-specific and considered unique to the Thai business context. In business correspondence, the term ‘Khun’ can be used anywhere when addressing to a person (normally Thai), for example, in the inside address (Khun + First Name + Surname, followed by his/her position and company’s name and address), in the body message (see TH012 above), and in the CC. (carbon copy) notation at the end of the letter as in *CC: Khun Woranee* (TH251). Sometimes it is abbreviated to ‘K.’, for example, *K. Chalermwong, K. Anchalie, K. Songkierti* (TH251) This Thai title ‘Khun’ reflects most in the salutation, and many foreign counterparts of Thais tend to adopt it as well when they write to their Thai correspondents as It is found in 70 letters: 42 TH (14%) and 28 NT (13%). ‘Dear + Khun + First name’ is a second most used type of salutations in my corpus.

‘Honourific Title’ is regarded here as the title which is deferential and formal. It includes the specific term ‘Excellency’ (used extensively when addressing an ambassador), some academic titles such as Dr. (when addressing to the addressee who

has a doctorate degree, not a medical doctor), and some formal occupation-related titles such as Professor, and Ambassador. Scott (1998), an American lecturer, conducted a study of the British oral and written forms of address through his observations of business and social practices during his one-year sabbatical leave in the United Kingdom, and through references from respected British business communication and general etiquette books. He attempts to show that although the United States and the United Kingdom share the same core language, the forms of address used in the British business community can be different from those used in the American business community because of cultural differences. His study indicates the British class consciousness that reflects in some forms of titles such as Sir and Dame, which are examples of 'a number of non-hereditary knighthoods granted to prominent British businesspersons'. (Scott 1998:54) He also states,

In British society, the possession of letters and qualifications, including military decorations, academic degrees, and memberships in professional bodies is noteworthy, and some British businesspersons may be offended if such designations are not placed after their names in written documents. (ibid:54)

We can see that even in the countries where people speak the same language, there are still some cultural differences. Richards and Sukwiwat (1982:120) point out that Thai society is an example of a culture where hierarchical dimensions are sharply marked. It can be assumed that the Thai social hierarchy is similar to the British one as Thailand also has a monarch, and a class-conscious system which involves hereditary and non-hereditary forms of titles (similar to the British nobility and knighthood). Perhaps the Thai social hierarchy is more obvious because the Thai language has different lexical and syntactic patterns for use with the royal family, Buddhist monks, elderly and children, and, to a lesser extent (especially in the business or bureaucratic context), people with superior, equal and inferior status. Senawong (1996:26) states,



The Thai society is a hierarchical one and Thais respect seniority. The observance of status distinctions is reflected in the selection and use of pronouns and pronominals. In Thai, speakers have to choose first and second person pronouns carefully so that they are appropriate for each individual addresser and addressee and also for the speech act. To many Thai speakers, the lack of T-V forms of address in English appear to foster social hierarchical disorder. They feel uncomfortable having to use *you* with a person to whom a deferential second person expression would have to be used in Thai.

The T-V forms above refer to the French forms of address; that is, *Tu* ('informal' you) and *Vous* ('formal' you). The Thai language is generally considered to have subtle gradations and a complex system of pronominal reference (Brudhiprabha 1975; Richards and Sukwiwat 1982; Sukwiwat 1983; Hudak 1990; Senawong 1996; Sriussadaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin 1999), as Brudhiprabha (1975:304) concludes in his explanation of the sociocultural context of the Thai language:

In sum, the Thai pronominal system entails an immensely complex structure of interpersonal relationship. It reveals all kinds of information about the speaker's attitude, background, and personality as well as reflects an important aspect of Thai culture.

The Thai pronominal variety is also reflected in their business letter writing especially in the salutation. As Scott (1998:54) has pointed out that some British people may feel offended if their titles concerning their academic degrees and/or memberships in professional bodies are not included in written business correspondence, this can be the case in the Thai context as well. Therefore, honourific titles are used rather extensively where appropriate. If the recipient is an ambassador, the honourific title 'Excellency' or 'Your Excellency' is used on its own, or some letters (mostly NT) use *Dear Ambassador*, either on its own or with the name of the recipient (first name and/or surname). Some TH letters use both ordinary title and honourific title as in *Dear Mr Ambassador*. (e.g. TH616, 624, 627) If the recipient holds a doctorate degree, the TH writer always puts the honourific title 'Dr' in front of the recipient's first name [if Thai, e.g. *Dear Dr Somrudee* (TH104), *Dear Dr Rujira* (TH530)], and the recipient's surname [if Non-Thai, e.g. *Dear Dr Woolfe* (TH426), *Dear Dr Delrio*

(TH520)]. Note that in both spoken and written discourse Thais do not address other Thai people by their surnames. This is perhaps a socio-linguistic rule. If they need to spell out the surname, it is usually accompanied by the first name. Richards and Sukwiwat (1982:120) comment, 'Although Thais use first names, this does not express solidarity in the same way as it does for Americans.'

Thais always have high respect for teachers and lecturers. Senawong (1996:26) states that teachers have a high status and are greatly revered by students. This cultural value also reflects in the business context. Business letters which involve contact with university lecturers usually have salutations that contain the honourific titles marking the addressee's designation(s), for example, *Dear Professor + First name* (TH237, 238, 240, 244), and *Dear Assoc. Prof. Dr. Juree* (TH302). 'Assoc. Prof.' stands for the academic title 'Associate Professor'; and it is also followed by 'Dr' which is the addressee's academic qualifications. This salutation may seem rather long to westerners, but it is considered culturally appropriate and acceptable in the Thai context. Another interesting example is '*Dear Acharn Purachai*'. (NT317) 'Acharn' is a Thai word for 'teacher' or 'professor'. This salutation is written by a native English speaker who is, presumably, accustomed to the Thai culture, and thus makes a correct use of the honourific title 'Acharn' + First name, as a Thai person would do when writing in Thai. As this is an English letter, it is very interesting how a native speaker blends in the cultural feature he/she picks up from the Thai context. This letter has full details of the addressee (*Assoc. Prof. Dr. Purachai Piamsomboon*, plus full address) in the inside address section on the top right corner before the salutation. We can see how the writer also spells out the recipient's name with full academic titles.

To native English speakers, the use of all the above-mentioned honourific titles may create a social distance between the addresser and the addressee. However, as Senawong (1996:26) points out, 'This kind of distance has a positive cultural value. It



is associated with respect for the seniority, status and autonomy of the individual'. Due to the hierarchical characteristic of the Thai society, using the right salutation with a correct honourific title(s) if known is a must. The use of honourific titles (both on its own or with other titles or names) accounts for approximately 12% of the salutations.

The term 'M.L.' is another cultural-specific feature. It is abbreviated from 'Mom Luang', which is one of the many Thai hereditary aristocratic titles. Basically, it means that the person with such a title is a descendent of a member of the royal family. There are three examples of Dear + M.L. + First name in my corpus which are written to the same recipient: *Dear M.L. Birabhongse* (NT377, NT378, TH603). Two of them are written by native English speakers, who, presumably know well about the Thai culture. In addition, the use of M.L. + First Name + Surname is found in the body of a TH letter: *'I have much pleasure to accept your invitation and I will be accompanied by M.L. Chanaphun Kridakorn, Assistant Governor-Hydro Plant as another EGAT executive to attend the above-mentioned conference.'* (TH205) As mentioned earlier, the Thai language has a complicated pronominal reference system. Special forms of address, e.g. to nobility, to the Buddhist clergy, are common in the Thai society. Apart from M.L., the following special forms of address are found in the body of some letters in my corpus: 'Mom Rajawongse' (indicating hereditary nobility similar to M.L.); and 'Khunying' (indicating a non-hereditary knighthood similar to the British term 'Dame'). For example, *'Mom Rajawongse Chafu Mongol Sonakul asked me to see and invite you as a founder and shareholder of the best British Public School, i.e. Harrow School implanted in Thailand.'* (TH004); and, *'I would like to invite you and Khunying Paranee (the addressee's wife) to visit our Residences (a resort in the north of Thailand).'* (NT024) It is interesting how these special Thai titles or forms of address are, from time to time, adopted in English business letter writing.

‘Kinship Term’ involves titles representing the relationship that exists between members of the family such as Father, Mother, Aunt, and Uncle. Scott (1998:56) states, ‘Kinship names are often used by Britons to refer to members of their family and are occasionally used for business communication purposes, especially in family-owned-and-operated businesses’. In the Thai language, ‘Kinship Term’ is often used in spoken discourse because it can act as either first, second and third person pronoun. Hudak (1990:41) states, ‘Kinship terms and other nouns referring to relationships may also be used as pronouns. For example, *mêe* ‘mother’ may mean ‘you’, and ‘she’ when speaking to or about one’s mother or ‘I, mother’ when the mother speaks to her child. Other terms following this pattern include *phôw* ‘father’, *lûuk* ‘child’, *phîi* ‘older sibling’, *nôw* ‘younger sibling’, *phîan* ‘friend’.’ However, ‘Kinship Term’ is less common in written discourse especially in the business context. It is rarely found in business salutations in my corpus. There is only one TH letter in which the salutation contains a kinship term: *Dear Uncle* (TH015). This letter involves some business negotiations between the writer who works for a western financial institution in Hong Kong and his uncle who works in a Thai bank. Both the writer and the recipient are Thai, but the letter is written in English. Apart from the salutation, *Dear Uncle*, there is nothing personal, the tone of the letter is rather formal and respectful. There is no kinship term found in any NT letter in my corpus.

Salutations with ‘Non-specific Term’ are always followed by the word ‘Dear’. I exclude ‘Dear Sir’, ‘Dear Sirs’, ‘Dear Sir/Madam’ and ‘Dear Sir or Madam’ from ‘Non-specific Term’ because they are considered as standard or typical salutations. ‘Non-specific Term’ here refers to the generalised terms of address which is used instead of the actual name of the recipient because of mass production of the letter. This type of salutations include, for example, Dear member (NT598), Dear cardmember (TH171, TH172, TH173), Dear colleague (TH023, NT531, TH601), Dear Client (NT049), Dear our valued clients (TH575), Dear Valued Customer (NT536), Dear Fellow STCC members (TH576), Dear Business Partner (TH555),



Dear manager (NT332, TH591), Dear Executive (NT533), Dear Valued Subscriber (TH573), and Dear all (NT107). The salutation, Dear + ‘Non-specific Term’, accounts for 9.5%.

With reference to Table 8.2, I have listed five most frequently found types of salutations respectively in the table below:

**Table 8.3: Top five salutations**

Total <i>N</i> = 515	TH <i>N</i> = 295	NT <i>N</i> = 220
1. Dear + Title +Surname (124) 24.08%	1. Dear + Title +Surname (68) 23.05%	1. Dear + Title +Surname (56) 25.45%
2. Dear + Khun + First Name (70) 13.59%	2. Dear + Khun + First Name (42) 14.24%	2. Dear + Khun + First Name (28) 12.73%
3. Dear + Sir (53) 10.29%	3. Dear + Sir (36) 12.20%	3. Dear + Non-specific Term (25) 11.36%
4. Dear + Non-specific Term (49) 9.51%	4. Dear + Non-specific Term (24) 8.14%	4. Dear + Sir (17) 7.73%
5. Dear + First Name (31) 6.02%	5. Dear + First Name (16) 5.52%	5. Dear + First Name (15) 6.82%

*Note: Numbers in brackets are numbers of letters. Percentage shown are based on the total numbers of letters in each category.*

We can see that Dear + Khun + First Name is the second most used type after Dear + Title + Surname, in both TH letters. This represents a unique characteristic of business correspondence in the Thai business context. The findings between the Top 5 salutations in the TH and NT letters are somewhat similar except that the NT letters use Dear + Non-specific Term (11.36%) more than Dear + Sir (7.73%) whereas the TH letters use Dear + Sir (12.20%) more than Dear + Non-specific Term (8.14%).<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that all 515 letters are context-dependent; some of which reflect continuous business relationship (which, in some cases, it is hard to tell from the content of the letters) whereas others involve new business dealings. The main focus of this section is to report on a variation in cross-cultural business salutations using an authentic corpus of business correspondence. The extensive use of ‘Khun’ is a remarkable characteristic which proves that there is some inter-language transfer or borrowing between Thai and English in the business context.

<sup>1</sup> The only statistically significant difference ( $p \leq 0.5$ ) is in the use of Dear + Sir. (see Appendix H)

One NT writer makes a conventionally incorrect use of ‘Khun’ by adding a surname instead of a first name. There could be two reasons for this mistake. First, he might think that ‘Khun’ is the addressee’s first name. Second, he might know that ‘Khun’ is a Thai term for Mr or Ms, and make an attempt to use it in a western way by adding a surname after it (as in Dear Mr + Surname). Either way, it is incorrect as ‘Khun’ must be followed by a first name or both first name and surname.

The salutation ‘For the attention of + Title + First Name + Surname’ is used by one TH writer. This is an interesting one because it seems that the writer translates it directly from the Thai salutation ‘Rian’ into English. In Thai salutations, we do not have an equivalent to the word ‘Dear’. In any official or formal context, the salutation is typically of the form ‘Rian + Khun + First Name (+ Surname)’. The term ‘Rian’ can be literally translated into ‘To (formally) inform’ or ‘For the (kind) attention of’ in English. If this is the case, it is another example of language transfer.

According to McComas and Satterwhite (1993:132), the salutation greets the reader and helps set the tone of the letter. Interestingly, they include some informal salutations such as ‘Good morning:’ (see Sample 8.1, also note the American use of colon instead of comma) in their textbook. In my findings, cross-cultural features such as the Thai system of pronominal reference (e.g. the use of ‘Khun’, ‘M.L.’ and some ‘Honourific Titles’) are taken into account in the Thai business context. ‘Khun’ is also acknowledged and explained in Olanvoravuth’s (1999) textbook. Interestingly, it not only used by Thais but also by native English speakers who do business with Thailand. In the next section, we will examine their complimentary closes.

**8.4.2 Variety of complimentary closes**

McComas and Satterwhite (1993:133) states that the complimentary close is a parting phrase that indicates the message has ended. There are 47 different complimentary closes (excluding the N/A category) found in my corpus of 515 letters and faxes. They are presented in the following table.



**Table 8.4: Complimentary closes**

Complimentary Closes		Total	%Total	TH	%TH	NT	%NT
1.	Yours sincerely	226	43.88%	130	44.07%	96	43.64%
2.	Sincerely yours	53	10.29%	38	12.88%	15	6.82%
3.	Best regards	52	10.10%	38	12.88%	14	6.36%
4.	Sincerely	37	7.18%	11	3.73%	26	11.82%
5.	Yours faithfully	34	6.60%	16	5.42%	18	8.18%
6.	N/A	20	3.88%	10	3.39%	10	4.55%
7.	Kind regards	13	2.52%	5	1.69%	8	3.64%
8.	Very truly yours	8	1.55%	6	2.03%	2	0.91%
9.	Best regards & Yours faithfully	6	1.17%	6	2.03%	0	0.00%
10.	With best regards	6	1.17%	5	1.69%	1	0.45%
11.	Yours truly	6	1.17%	5	1.69%	1	0.45%
12.	Regards	5	0.97%	3	1.02%	2	0.91%
13.	Best wishes	3	0.58%	0	0.00%	3	1.36%
14.	Thanks & Best Regards	3	0.58%	2	0.68%	1	0.45%
15.	With kind regards	3	0.58%	1	0.34%	2	0.91%
16.	With regards	3	0.58%	3	1.02%	0	0.00%
17.	All the best	2	0.39%	2	0.68%	0	0.00%
18.	Cordially	2	0.39%	0	0.00%	2	0.91%
19.	Thank you and Kind regards	2	0.39%	0	0.00%	2	0.91%
20.	Yours respectfully	2	0.39%	1	0.34%	1	0.45%
21.	Yours very truly	2	0.39%	1	0.34%	1	0.45%
22.	Best regard	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
23.	Bon Voyage	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
24.	Faithfully yours	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
25.	Have a nice day	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
26.	Have a nice week-end	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
27.	Many thank and Best regards	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
28.	Many thanks & Kind regards	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
29.	Regard	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
30.	Respectfully	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
31.	Respectfully yours	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
32.	Thank you and Best regards	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
33.	Thank you for caring	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
34.	Thank you, Best regards & Yours faithfully	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
35.	Truly yours	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
36.	Very best regards	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
37.	With best regards & Yours sincerely	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
38.	With best regards and many thanks	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
39.	With good wishes	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
40.	With kindest regards, Yours faithfully	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
41.	With kindest respect and warmest regards & Yours respectfully	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
42.	With my best regards	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
43.	With my best wishes	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
44.	With my warmest regards	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
45.	With regards & Yours in co-operation	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
46.	With warm personal regards	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
47.	With warmest regards	1	0.19%	0	0.00%	1	0.45%
48.	Your faithfully	1	0.19%	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
Total		515	100.00%	295	100.00%	220	100.00%

The most popular type of complimentary close is ‘Yours sincerely’, which accounts for almost 44% of the total. It should be noted that the above list is based on real-life data; and I separate the complimentary closes which are spelt incorrectly (e.g. regard, best regard, your faithfully) from those correct ones. There are 4 complimentary closes which are incorrectly spelt; 2 of which are TH and the others are NT. They are presumably considered as spelling mistakes. All complimentary closes occur at the end of the message before the signature, except for 20 items marked with the term ‘N/A’ (10TH and 10NT), which do not have any parting phrase, and instantly end the message with the signature. Interestingly, they are mostly letters (16 letters and 4 faxes). From their context, they represent ongoing business dealings, which presumably is the reason for omission of complimentary closes that suggests lack of formality. On the contrary, there are also TH and NT letters with more than one complimentary close, for example, Best regards & Yours faithfully. The sign ‘&’ indicates that the two complimentary closes are written separately (i.e. they are not joined together with the conjunction ‘and’). They are put in a new category if they are joined together, as in ‘Thank you and Best regards’, and ‘With best regards and many thanks’. (see Table 8.4) The following table summarises five most frequently used types of complimentary closes:

**Table 8.5: Top five complimentary closes**

Total <i>N</i> = 515	TH <i>N</i> = 295	NT <i>N</i> = 220
1. Yours sincerely (226) 43.88%	1. Yours sincerely (130) 44.07%	1. Yours sincerely (96) 43.64%
2. Sincerely yours (53) 10.29%	2. Sincerely yours (38) 12.88%	2. Sincerely (26) 11.82%
3. Best regards (52) 7.38%	3. Best regards (38) 12.88%	3. Yours faithfully (18) 8.18%
4. Sincerely (37) 7.18%	4. Yours faithfully (16) 5.42%	4. Sincerely yours (15) 6.82%
5. Yours faithfully (34) 6.60%	5. Sincerely (11) 3.73%	5. Best regards (14) 6.36%

*Note: Numbers in brackets are numbers of letters. Percentage shown are based on the total numbers of letters in each category.*

It is noticeable that the most frequently found complimentary closes listed above are of standard types which are common in letter writing in general. ‘Yours sincerely’ is the most popular type among both TH and NT letters. An obvious difference between



the two groups is the use of 'Sincerely'. This type of complimentary comes second in the NT group, accounting for 11.82%. It comes fifth in the TH group, accounting for only 3.73%. The TH letters use 'Sincerely yours' and 'Best regards' twice as much as the NT letters. Differences in these three categories are statistically significant. (see Appendix I)

The combination of more than one complimentary closes is found in both groups. The TH writers sometimes combine the formal complimentary close (Yours faithfully) with a less formal one (Best regards). Some TH letters use the phrases 'Have a nice day' and 'Have a nice week-end' as complimentary closes. These are usually associated with spoken English, as is 'All the best'. The TH letters with these complimentary closes involve ongoing business relationship in which both writers and readers know each other well. There are 4 grammatically incorrect complimentary closes, i.e., 'Regard' and 'Best regard' (NT), 'Many thank' and 'Your faithfully' (TH), which presumably are spelling/typing mistakes. The NT letters sometimes use unusual complimentary closes such as 'Cordially' and 'Bon Voyage'. According to McComas and Satterwhite (1993:133), 'Sincerely' and 'Cordially' are considered as personal; and we can see that the NT writers use them more than the TH writers. It can be said that the TH writers do not diversify their complimentary closes as much as the NT writers do, and that expressions of thanks are found more often in the TH complimentary closes. However, in general, the majority of complimentary closes used by both groups tend to be typical standard formulaic ones such as 'Yours sincerely', 'Sincerely yours', and 'Best regards'.

It is conventionally understood that the complimentary close should conform with the salutation. (Mavor 1988; McComas and Satterwhite 1993) Savangvarorose (1997) and Olanvoravuth (1999) only provide a list of formal and informal complimentary closes in descending order, but do not mention the conformity. From my conversation with a few British friends and lecturers, when the writer use 'Dear +

Title + Surname' as salutation, he/she should end the letter with 'Yours sincerely'. Also if the writer use 'Dear + Sir (or Sir/Madam)' when he/she does not know the recipient's name, the matching complimentary close is 'Yours faithfully'. These two pairs are also illustrated in Mavor (1988:97): '*Dear Mr Paignton/Dear Mrs Wilson – Yours sincerely; and Dear Sir/Madam – Yours faithfully*'. McComas and Satterwhite (1993:133) say that if the writer has greeted the reader with Dear + First Name, he/she will probably close with *Sincerely*. I looked through my corpus to see if the TH and NT letters show this type of conformity or not. My findings reveal that these letters do not always follow the conventions. The conformity between salutations and complimentary closes varies. For example, only one NT letter with Dear + First Name (out of 31) ends with 'Sincerely'. Their most frequently found complimentary closes in this case are 'Yours sincerely', 'Best regards' and 'Kind Regards' respectively. The TH letters extensively use 'Yours sincerely' whereas the NT letters prefer 'Best regards'.

As for the letters with the salutation 'Dear + Sir/Sirs (Sir/Madam, and Sir or Madam)', there are 85 in total, but only 13 (6NT, 7TH) end with 'Yours faithfully'. There are five more letters which use the relatively formal complimentary closes: 'Respectfully yours', 'Yours respectfully', 'Faithfully yours', 'Very Truly yours' and 'Truly yours'. However, the most used type of complimentary close in this category is 'Yours sincerely', which are found in 35 letters (17NT, 18TH). Other complimentary closes include 'Sincerely yours' (12), 'Best regards' (9) and 'Sincerely' (3). The case of 'Dear + Title + Surname' is found to be most close to the convention as 54% of the letters with this salutation have 'Yours sincerely' as complimentary close. There are 124 letters (56NT, 68TH) in this category. A total of 67 letters (31NT, 36TH) use 'Yours sincerely'. Other letters use, for example, 'Sincerely yours' (16), 'Sincerely' (10), 'Best regards' (7), and 'Kind regards' (4). 'Yours sincerely' and 'Sincerely' are found with various types of salutations including Dear Khun + First Name, Dear + Honourific Title + First Name and/ or Surname (or both), Dear + Sir, Dear + Non-



Title + First Name and/ or Surname (or both), Dear + Sir, Dear + Non-specific Term, Dear + First Name, and so on. ‘Yours faithfully’ is also found with the salutations such as Dear + Title + First Name or Surname, Dear + Honourific Title + First Name or Surname, Dear + Non-specific Term, and Dear + Khun + First name.

These findings suggest that nowadays, especially in cross-cultural communication, the discourse conventions for a business letter such as the conformity between salutations and complimentary closes are more flexible, as many business communicators, not only Thai but also native English speakers, do not follow the conventions and sometimes integrate elements of cultural features (e.g. ‘Khun’) in their letters.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This chapter gives some insights into the materials provided in three selected textbooks, which are used as Business English writing coursebooks in three leading Thai universities. Artificial and/or authentic samples of sales promotion, request and invitation letters presented in those textbooks are investigated in terms of their move structure, textual features, politeness strategies and rhetorical appeals. The findings are compared to those emerging from previous analyses of my authentic corpus. It is interesting to see that the authentic letter samples in the American textbook resemble those in my NT corpus; and that despite the artificial nature of most Thai samples in the two Thai textbooks, they reveal many characteristics similar to those found in my TH corpus. This confirms differences in the NT and TH persuasive letter writing.

The findings on lexico-grammatical errors and salutations and complimentary closes show that transfer of language and culture can occur in cross-cultural business communication. It is apparent that between the American and Thai textbooks, the latter acknowledges more aspects of linguistic and cultural differences and integrate them in their materials.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter aims to provide some insights attained from the contrastive analyses of cross-cultural persuasive correspondence in the previous chapters. The first section is a summary of the role of English in the Thai business context. Then, in the second section, a discussion of the main findings is presented in relation to my research questions. The third section discusses the implications of the findings in terms of pedagogical and professional perspectives, and the final section provides some recommendations for further research.

#### 9.1 The Role of English in the Thai Business Context

My corpus confirms the increasingly important role of English in written business communication in Thailand, both locally and internationally. In their article in *Business Week*, Baker et al. (2001) state that English is firmly entrenched almost everywhere as the international language of business, finance, and technology. They report on the growth of English in the European workplace by pointing out that,

The implications for business are enormous. It's no longer just top execs who need to speak English. Everyone in the corporate food chain is feeling the pressure to learn a common tongue as companies globalize and democratize. These days in formerly national companies such as Renaults and BMW, managers, engineers, even leading blue-collar workers are constantly calling and e-mailing colleagues and customers in Europe, the U.S., and Japan. The language usually is English, an industrial tool now as basic as the screwdriver. (ibid:36)

They also report that workers with English language skills often demand salaries 25% to 35% above those who cannot speak English. Although there is no such report on the Thai workplace, we can see from my survey of the Thai job market in Chapter 1 that the demand for workers with English proficiency is high. My corpus shows the



range of companies and workers in Thai context, which suggests the importance of English. (see 3.1 and Appendix C) As in the European workplace, English is now the main medium of international business communication in the Thai business context. As a result, Business English teaching in Thailand is booming, but, surprisingly, research into the Thai use of Business English is rare. Kachru (1997:75-76) comments that the past decade has seen ‘considerable interest in the following research areas which provide a better understanding of the English-using communities across cultures and languages: national and regional profiles; corpus analysis; contrastive discourse analysis; pragmatics research; lexicographical studies; and ethical issues’. This is not the case of the Thai business context. The present study has attempted to fill the gap and shed light on the role and use of one particular type of written English business discourse: persuasive correspondence.

The next section will present a summary of the main findings which report on the contrastive analyses of sales promotion, request and invitation letters discussed in Chapter 4 – 8.

## **9.2 Summary of the Main Findings**

My corpus of authentic persuasive texts represents written texts in Halliday’s terminology, cited in Bloor and Bloor (1995:4), which defines a text as a chunk of language that is actually spoken or written for the purposes of communication by real people in actual circumstances. I have analysed, compared and contrasted patterns of language used in three types of persuasive correspondence by Thai business professionals with their trading partners who are native English speakers.

Using an authentic corpus of written business discourse, this research has attempted to bring together three dimensions of text and discourse analysis; namely, structural, textual, and pragmatic analyses, underlying the nature of persuasive correspondence.

The main findings are in response to my research questions in 2.2.2, and are summarised accordingly as follows:

### 9.2.1 Rhetorical Analysis

Cross-cultural variations in terms of rhetorical form were observed and analysed. Move analysis was conducted in the letters of sales promotion and invitation. Due to the diverse content of the letters of request, the identification of its structural representation was introduced instead of move analysis. The findings reveal both similarities and differences in the rhetorical patterns of the three types of persuasive letters written by Thais and native English speakers. In the TH sales promotion letters, the non-existence of Move 3, *Offering incentives*, and the highly infrequent use of Move 6, *Using pressure tactics*, make them different from the NT and AMEX letters. The differences in the way the NT and TH writers introduce the main requests in the letters of request are remarkable. While most NT writers start the requests in the beginning of the letters, most TH writers introduce them in the middle or penultimate part of the letters after either stating pre-requests or giving background information, introduction and/or reference. Explanations and expressions of gratitude/appreciation are found more extensively in the TH letters of request.

The patterns of moves in the NT and TH letters of invitation are very similar although many TH writers tend to include more details in the invitation messages (which make the sentences long and complex) while most NT writers relegate the details to another sentence or paragraph. It should be noted that *soliciting response* is a common move found in all three types of persuasive letters here. In the letters of request, this move occurs as offers such as ‘If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact...’ (often found with expressions of thanks) in the post-requests. *Soliciting response* in sales promotion and request letters aims to facilitate or accommodate what the reader may need in order to make a decision to buy or to comply with the



request respectively. It helps soften the tone of the letters and shows the writer's goodwill to help. However, this move is more than a facilitating move in the letters of invitation. The writers of these letters need the reader's reply (either acceptance or decline) in order to fulfil the invitation process. This marks an interesting rhetorical difference across the types of persuasive correspondence.

### 9.2.2 Linguistic Features

Bickner and Peyasantiwong's (1988), and Indrasuta's (1988) studies on English writing of Thai students reveal some linguistic differences. (see 2.1.1) The former find the Thai essays impersonal and formal whereas the American essays are very personal with more speech-like vocabulary and a conversational tone. This difference is reported to be presumably caused by sociolinguistic constraints. The latter reports on linguistic, stylistic and rhetorical differences, which are claimed to be influenced mainly by cultural factors. In the analyses of my persuasive corpus, I have examined the linguistic realisations of each move, and other relevant linguistic features, and pointed out the similarities and differences between the TH and NT letters. Although there are some important differences, they concern form rather than function, and, as a result, are unlikely to cause miscommunication.

The interesting major linguistic differences are mood types, the use of formulaic expressions, and lexical choice that indicates different degrees of formality. The TH persuasive letters generally use the declarative mood type. Their use of imperative seems to be limited and is often in the form of 'If-clause' with the politeness marker 'please'. The NT letters use more imperative mood, either with or without the politeness marker 'please'. They also use many more polar interrogatives and modal-initial interrogatives in the request sentences. Most TH letters of sales promotion, request and invitation make an extensive use of formulaic or 'stock' expressions especially those concerning gratitude, appreciation and anticipation. The degree of

formality in the TH and NT letters is rather different in that most TH letters sound more deferential and formal with the use of lexical choice such as softening mechanisms (e.g. ‘please (kindly)’) and impersonalizing mechanisms (e.g. occasional use of ‘topic-orientation’ or avoidance of ‘I’/‘you’, the use of passive voice).

An appraisal analysis was conducted to identify the appraisal items in Move 2, *Introducing the offer*, in the sales promotion letters. The most frequently used category of appraisal items is Appreciation in which the sub-category ‘Valuation’ is most extensively found in the NT, AMEX, and TH letters. The AMEX correspondence is also characterised by Amplification (especially Augmenting) and Composition, which distinguish them from the NT and TH letters.

I have also attempted to categorise systematically linguistic problems (mainly syntax) found in my TH corpus. Although a number of TH letters have some lexico-grammatical errors (see 8.3), these errors do not seem to hinder the main goals of the letters as their overall content is still understandable. In my corpus, only a few run-on sentences are likely to cause confusion because of their ambiguity. However, the reader who may share background information or schematic knowledge should not have difficulties in interpreting the intended meanings. My findings support Hiranburana’s (1996:381) findings which report that ‘most of the deviations in non-native business texts are grammatical rather than pragmatic and these grammatical deviations, with certain pragmatic ones, in context would rarely cause miscommunication.’

### **9.2.3 Persuasion and Politeness Strategies**

The Aristotelian concept of persuasive rhetoric is used to examine the rhetorical appeals used in my corpus. The TH letters generally use a combination of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* whereas the NT letters tend to predominantly use a strong *logos*.



These three rhetorical appeals can be regarded as persuasion strategies; and the findings reveal some differences in the TH and NT persuasive conventions. It should be noted that *pathos* (emotional appeals) is most frequently found especially in the TH letters of request. *Ethos* (credibility appeals) is extensively used in the moves 'Establishing credentials' and 'Establishing the context' in the sales promotion and invitation letters respectively, and also in the letters of request that mainly concern new business relationships. A strong *logos* (rational appeals) is likely to make the NT letters more direct, individualistic and goal-oriented. Most TH letters exhibit collectivism by stressing collaborative image and relationship-building. This supports Mulholland's (1997) claim which indicates the inclusion of emotional or family matters (or, in my case, connection-building) in the Asian business interaction.

Following Brown and Levinson (1987), I examined politeness strategies in my corpus and found the following major differences between the TH and NT letters. First, the TH sales promotion letters do not use 'baldly on record' strategy. Second, the TH request letters use more negative-politeness strategy especially in the form of hedging (e.g. the delayed introduction of purpose) and excessive softening mechanisms such as 'please kindly'. Third, 'baldly on record' and positive-politeness strategies are found most extensively in the NT and, to a lesser extent, TH letters of invitation as the writers have to be explicit and show enthusiasm in their invitations, and express shared interest, common ground or mutual benefits to increase the likelihood of the reader's acceptance.

It seems that the TH writers in general prefer a more deferential, indirect and self-effacing style of persuasion. They employ more face-saving politeness strategies and attempt to be extremely polite so that the reader will comply with their request or give them cooperation. To examine the reader's reaction to the NT and TH persuasive correspondence is beyond the scope of this research, but this issue is interesting and prompts the need for further investigation.

#### 9.2.4 Transfer of the Thai Language and Culture

Connor (1996:135) notes that cross-cultural writing in metaprofessional genres such as business letters, resumes and job applications in another language rather than one's own is increasing, and that 'it has been found that in these contexts, too (*in addition to student essays and academic texts*), second language writers transfer patterns and styles from the first language to the second'. Previous research on how Thais use English is little and mainly concerns spoken interaction. It reveals the transfer of the Thai linguistic and cultural values into their use of English. (see Senawong 1996; Sukwiwat 1983; Richards and Sukwiwat 1982)

In addition to her examples of spoken interactions, Sukwiwat (1983) presents a sample of a short report written by a Thai public health worker who went on a training programme in the United States and was required to submit brief reports on his activities. This report, like other samples of spoken discourse presented in her study, shows various lexico-semantic and syntactic problems caused by the transfer of the Thai language. Examples are such as 'During this trip I *got the knowledge* about...', '*Almost* the doctors and nurses *that* I spoke to...', and '*The most important thing* (omission of 'was that') I had a chance to...'. Sukwiwat (1983:208) explains,

The Thai variety of English, if such variety exists, is characterized not only by distinctive phonological patterns but also by distinctive semantic and syntactic patterns, many (though not all) of which can be traced to interference from the Thai language. At a somewhat deeper level of analysis, the cultural background of Thai speakers of English can be seen to influence discourse patterns: both discourse in its social interactional sense and in its academic sense – e.g. in the way Thai students write expository English, quite apart from their often variant mechanical, lexical, and syntactic choices.

She concludes that transfer of semantic and syntactic features from the Thai language into Thai English can cause communication difficulties. She expresses, 'Examining Thai culture values, Thai thought and Thai communication patterns as a means of



understanding the Thai variety of English can be both absorbing and frustrating. But that is perhaps the only way you will be able to interpret “Thai English”.’ (ibid:210)

As reported by Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988), and Indrasuta (1988), linguistic and stylistic differences between English and Thai essays are mainly caused by sociocultural constraints and cultural factors. My analyses in the previous chapters reveal a number of differences between the TH and NT letters, many of which can be explained through an investigation into the Thai language and culture. My main findings report on the rhetorical form, linguistic features, persuasion and politeness strategies, as summarised above. Most differences (e.g. the delayed introduction of purpose in requests, indirectness, formality and excessive politeness) are caused by either Thai linguistic or cultural influence (or both). The ‘kreng jai’ concept can be linked to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of face which helps identify the TH politeness strategies. Some interference from the Thai language can explain the main lexico-grammatical errors such as wrong form of verbs (influenced by the non-inflected nature of Thai), and omission or wrong use of determiners (influenced by the absence of a system of ‘articles’ in Thai). The cultural use of ‘Khun’ and some honourific terms of address (including the English abbreviations of the Thai hereditary aristocratic titles such as M.L.) in the salutations is another example of cultural transfer in the business context.

### **9.2.5 Authentic Corpus vs. Textbook Materials**

Three pairs of English persuasive letters presented in one American and two Thai textbooks on business writing were examined in the same way as my corpus was analysed. The three textbooks provide both authentic (especially in the American textbook) and artificial samples of various types of letters. Interestingly, each pair of their letters of sales promotion, request and invitation reveals differences similar to those generally found between the TH and NT letters of each type. It seems that the

authentic samples from the American textbook have similar structural and textual features as the NT letters in general whereas the artificial samples from the Thai textbooks reflect patterns and styles of persuasive writing similar to those typically found in the TH letters in my corpus.

Regarding the grammar reference, both Thai textbooks provide more detailed explanations on grammatical usage with numerous ready-made sets of ‘model’ expressions, phrases and sentences (for different business situations), and tend to integrate more linguistic and cultural elements (e.g. the cultural use of *Dear+Khun+First Name*) in their materials. In sum, both American and Thai textbooks provide guidelines and samples of letters that tend to represent the American and Thai business contexts respectively. As for the issue of effectiveness, they seem to use different approaches presumably targeted at different audiences. The American textbook emphasises autonomous skills development through practice and self-production while the Thai textbooks focus on the presentation and duplication of grammatical language and skills, which is a rather ‘spoon-fed’, imitative approach. The question of effectiveness of textbook materials for teaching business writing skills depends on the target audience and their context (e.g. who they need to write to, for what purposes, to where, etc.).

### **9.3 Implications of the Findings**

So far I have summarised the main findings in relation to the research questions of this thesis. My corpus represents an up-to-date body of material (collected during 1998-2000) of unedited English business letters (dated from late 1980s to 2000), which are not usually easy to obtain for linguistic analysis. This research reports on the contrastive analysis of persuasive correspondence on a cross-cultural (Thai vs. English) basis. The implications of the findings are twofold: pedagogical and professional.



### 9.3.1 Pedagogical implications

St John (1996:5) notes that in Business English in the 1990s ‘practice is rarely research led and the relatively little research there is is not always directed towards the actualities of teaching and courses’. My research does have implications for the teaching practices of Business English writing especially in the Thai business context. First, my corpus reveals different types of persuasive correspondence used in various situations, which imply the need for the teacher to introduce them to the students as they are the types of correspondence the students will need to read and write at work. In addition to accuracy in English usage, the students should be encouraged to pursue business English communication in a culturally appropriate fashion. An emphasis should be made on developing intercultural competence by acknowledging linguistic and cultural differences in business writing across cultures.

Second, this study raises the issue of effective materials for teaching Business English writing. Rogerson-Revell (1999:69) points out that ‘the interface between interaction analysis and materials production is still weak: the number of rigorous research studies with direct applications to language and communication textbooks is quite small’. She suggests the use of examples of authentic professional interactions in teaching interactive strategies for business meetings. Like her cross-cultural study which relates sociolinguistic research to Business English training practice, my research raises an awareness of the diversity of textbook materials (American vs. Thai) used in Thai universities, and implies the need for the teacher to understand the differences in Thai and western writing conventions presented in the textbooks so that he/she can teach the students accordingly.

Attention should also be drawn to how better use might be made of textbook materials, which normally include letter samples, guidelines, and grammar reference. Most textbooks give general writing guidelines and lists of ‘model’ expressions,

vocabulary, *do*'s and *don*'ts in writing a specific type of business letter. My findings suggest that it would be more beneficial if the teacher can point out the pattern of moves used in the textbook's letter samples such as a request letter, and show the students the linguistic realisation of each move, and teach them how to identify and use lexical choice and politeness strategies persuasively and appropriately in a given context. In a similar vein as Rogerson-Revell's (1999) suggestion, authentic samples of business correspondence are also recommended in order to familiarize the students with the likely complexity of 'real-life' business letters. This supports Louhiala-Salminen's (1996:50) viewpoint expressed in her article 'The Business Communication Classroom vs. Reality' that, 'in course design, business communication should not be treated as something separate from the real business, not as a skill separate from other professional skills, not as a store of phrases and idioms, but rather as a thread which is interwoven in everything that happens in businesses.'

Lastly, my findings imply a call for developing the students' English writing skills and techniques necessary for producing accurate and professional business correspondence. In my TH corpus, there are several letters that use advanced business vocabulary and terminology in appropriate business contexts. However, sometimes the TH writers confuse such terminology by using it in a wrong grammatical pattern such as wrong form of verb or preposition, or putting it in a long, complex, or run-on sentence. This could downplay the effect of the letter. Therefore, the teacher should also focus on accuracy and clarity in teaching business letter writing. Moreover, according to Hewings (1999:146), 'students should be taught to write a variety of texts which respond to such influence as perception of audience, the status of writer and reader, purpose, and other aspects of the context in which the documents will be received.'



### 9.3.2 Professional implications

These implications are business-related aimed especially for Thai and western business professionals who do business together. Louhiala-Salminen (1999:113) states that the purpose of business writing is ‘the need of the partners to achieve a common goal, i.e. to complete a business transaction, at the same time maintaining a mutually rewarding relationship that enables co-operation in the future, too.’ Despite some differences in rhetorical form, linguistic features and politeness strategies, the TH letters can still fulfil their communicative purposes as their English messages in general tend to have sufficient comprehensibility although some are not at the native or near-native level of English. However, my findings imply that in order to enhance the effectiveness of business communication especially persuasive writing, both parties should be aware of differences in their writing conventions.

Hewings (1999:146) regards business writing as a social activity in which the contexts and values of their respective discourse communities determine preferred writing conventions. The Thai business context is not an exception, as we can see that there are some linguistic and cultural transfers which differentiate the TH and NT corpus. It is not right to judge the effectiveness or appropriateness of the two writing conventions on the basis of how similar the letters are to the recipient’s conventions and/or context. What is considered appropriate in one context may be inappropriate in another context. For example, the Thai reader may feel that some NT letters of request are too direct or pushy because the Thai request writing conventions value indirectness. On the other hand, the western reader may find some TH letters too long, indirect, and too polite (or even gushy). Therefore, there is a need to create better cross-cultural understanding to facilitate communication among business professionals from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Once this understanding is established, cultural adaptation or accommodation may occur (e.g. the use of the term ‘Khun’ or honourific title by a Non-Thai), which could have a

positive effect and lead to a smoother or more pleasant business relationship between both parties.

## **9.4 Recommendations of Further Research**

This research has dealt with the challenge of investigating the authentic persuasive correspondence in the Thai business context and has gone beyond the surface-level comparisons of the letters of sales promotion, request and invitation written by Thais and native English speakers. However, due to the limitations of the data, other issues such as power and status, including old and new business relationships, could not be explored. Therefore, further research is called for to investigate such issues, which could reveal interesting findings especially in the Thai context in which social hierarchy and status-orientation relationship are extensively found.

Other potential areas for further research include contrastive rhetoric of different types of written business discourse such as letters of negotiation, apology, job application, claim and adjustment; studies on business e-mails in the Thai context; contrastive analysis of correspondence in a particular type of business (e.g. finance, credit card, import/export); comparative studies across different groups of business writers (e.g. Thai, native and non-Thai-non-native English speakers); and contrastive rhetoric of Thai-medium and English-medium business letters (to extend the investigation into the syntactic and semantic structures of the Thai language and potential linguistic transfer).

Another research area that needs more exploration is the adaptability and expansion of the findings of this research to the teaching of persuasive business writing for Thai tertiary students. The multidisciplinary approach of this research has paved the way for establishing pedagogical concerns regarding innovation of effective materials and methods in teaching Business English writing whereby cross-cultural differences in



writing conventions and underlying strategies should be taken into consideration. In pursuing the overall goal of the present study further, future research in this field should attempt to understand and keep pace with the dynamic global business environment, where ongoing changes in communication patterns and strategies occur, in order to focus its directions accordingly.

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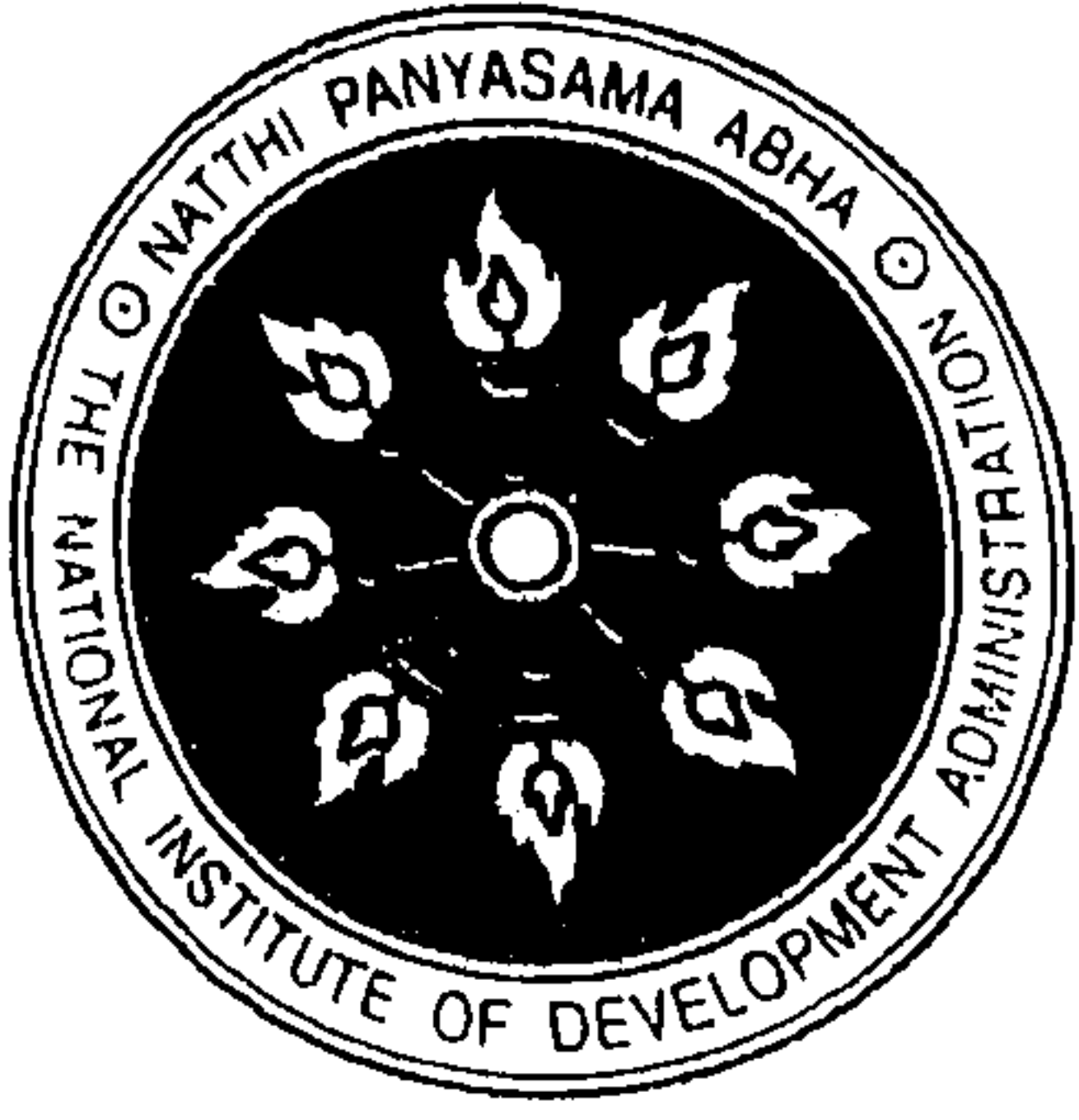
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**APPENDIX A**  
**My letter regarding data collection (in Thai)**



**คณะภาษาและการสื่อสาร สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์**

118 ถนนเสรีไทย แขวงคลองจั่น เขตบางกะปิ กรุงเทพฯ 10240 โทร. 377-7400-19, 377-9660-9 ต่อ 2 หรือ 377-7892, 374-5754 โทรสาร 377-7892

**School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development Administration**

118 Seri Thai Rd., Klong Chan, Bangkok 10240, Thailand Tel. (662) 377-7400-19,

Ext. 2646, 2348 or 377-7892, 374-5754 Fax: (662) 377-7892

ที่อยู่ของบริษัท

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เรื่อง ขอความอนุเคราะห์ใช้ตัวอย่างเอกสารติดต่อทางธุรกิจเพื่องานวิจัยปริญญาเอกที่ประเทศอังกฤษ  
สิ่งที่ส่งมาด้วย จดหมายรับรองจากอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาในการทำวิทยานิพนธ์

๑๗ มกราคม ๒๕๕๒

เรียน \_\_\_\_\_

ด้วยดิฉัน น.ส. อรองค์ ชาคร ข้าราชการตำแหน่งอาจารย์ประจำคณะภาษาและการสื่อสาร ที่สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์ (นิด้า) ซึ่งขณะนี้กำลังศึกษาต่อระดับปริญญาเอก สาขาภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์เพื่อการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ ที่ University of Warwick ประเทศอังกฤษ มีความประสงค์จะขอความอนุเคราะห์จากองค์กรของท่านในการให้ข้อมูลเพื่อใช้ในการทำวิจัยเกี่ยวกับการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจของคนไทยและเจ้าของภาษา โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์หลักเพื่อปรับปรุงและพัฒนาหลักสูตรการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อธุรกิจในประเทศไทยให้ได้มาตรฐานและมีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น

ข้อมูลที่ขอความอนุเคราะห์จากท่านอันจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่องานวิทยานิพนธ์เรื่องนี้อย่างยิ่ง คือ เอกสารหรือสำเนาเอกสารติดต่อทางธุรกิจทุกรูปแบบทั้งภายในและภายนอกองค์กร ทั้งภายในประเทศไทยและต่างประเทศ เช่น จดหมายธุรกิจ แฟกซ์ บันทึกทางธุรกิจ เป็นต้น เอกสารเหล่านี้ไม่ว่าจะเขียนโดยคนไทยหรือเจ้าของภาษา ไม่ว่าเก่าหรือใหม่จะถูกนำมาวิเคราะห์เชิงภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ หากเป็นไปได้ ดิฉันอยากจะขอเอกสารที่เป็นการโต้ตอบสองฝ่ายอย่างต่อเนื่องกัน (เช่น องค์กรของท่านส่งจดหมายไปยังบริษัทต่างประเทศ และได้รับคำตอบกลับมา) โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเอกสารที่เป็นการโต้ตอบกันไปมาเป็นจำนวนหลายๆ ฉบับ (อย่างน้อย ๓-๑๐ ฉบับขึ้นไป) เพื่อนำมาใช้วิเคราะห์ถึงกลวิธีการเขียนเชิงภาษาศาสตร์อย่างละเอียด โดยไม่มีการเปิดเผยชื่อบุคคล ข้อมูลทางธุรกิจหรือองค์กรที่เกี่ยวข้องแต่อย่างใด ดิฉันขอรับรองว่าข้อมูลที่ท่านอนุเคราะห์จะนำไปใช้ในงานวิจัยนี้เท่านั้น และจะไม่นำไปเปิดเผยในที่ใดๆ นอกจากในงานวิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญาเอกภาษาอังกฤษของดิฉัน ซึ่งจะนำเสนอต่อคณาจารย์มหาวิทยาลัย Warwick ประเทศอังกฤษ

ดิฉันหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าจะได้รับความร่วมมือจากท่านเพื่อร่วมกันสรรค์สร้างเป็นวิทยาทานด้านการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษที่ถูกต้องจะเป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งต่อนักเรียนนักศึกษาไทย เป็นการสร้างบุคลากรที่มีความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อธุรกิจต่อไปในอนาคต หากท่านมีข้อสงสัยประการใด กรุณาติดต่อดิฉันตามที่อยู่ข้างต้น เพื่อเป็นการตอบแทนองค์กรของท่านสำหรับความช่วยเหลือครั้งนี้ ดิฉันยินดีจะจัดส่งสำเนาวิทยานิพนธ์ไปให้เมื่อแล้วเสร็จ หากท่านต้องการ ขอขอบพระคุณอย่างสูงมาก ณ โอกาสนี้

ด้วยความเคารพอย่างสูง

## APPENDIX A

(Continued)

### **An unofficial English translation of my Thai letter regarding the data collection**

17<sup>th</sup> January 1999

Company's Address:

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Subject: A Request for samples of business correspondence for a PhD Research

My name is Ora-Ong Chakorn. I am a lecturer of Business English at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) in Bangkok, Thailand. At present I am undertaking a PhD research on contrastive rhetoric of written business discourse across cultures at the University of Warwick, England. My overall aim is to analyse authentic business correspondence for the development of cross-cultural strategies for effective business communication and the improvement of advanced materials and methods in teaching Business English writing in Thailand.

This research requires a corpus of authentic business correspondence from Thai companies. Therefore, I would like to ask for your kind assistance in giving me your samples of business correspondence such as letters and faxes, written by your Thai staff and by your foreign counterparts, preferably native English speakers. These samples will be kept confidential. They will be analysed from linguistic perspectives, in terms of text and discourse analysis, contrastive rhetoric, and cross-cultural politeness strategies. Some sentences from your samples may be presented in the analytical part of my thesis. Since I will focus on the use of language, the names of any person or company that appeared in your samples can be changed to maintain confidentiality (if you wish). I assure that your data will be used only in this PhD thesis and my relevant research. Attached herewith is a copy of a letter of confirmation from my supervisor at the University of Warwick, England.

I would appreciate it if you could help on this matter in order to raise an awareness of the effective use of written Business English among Thai students and business professionals, and to help develop a better understanding in cross-cultural business communication. Please kindly send the samples of business correspondence (preferably 3-10 samples or more) to the address above at your convenience. If you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please inform me if you would like a copy of my thesis when it finishes. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Ora-Ong Chakorn)

Enc.



**APPENDIX B**  
**An e-mail sample**

**From:** Roy Page <roy\_page@lineone.net>  
**To:** info@tat-uk.demon.co.uk <info@tat-uk.demon.co.uk>  
**Date:** 02 August 2000 21:41  
**Subject:** Tourist Information

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Dear Sir/Madam,

My wife and I have booked a holiday in the Far East during January and February 2001. One of our stays will be in Bangkok. I wish to organise information on places of interest and street maps etc before the holiday so that I can advance plan my itinerary, thus saving time when we are there.

Could you forward any relevant information to:

Mr R. Page,  
10 Mortlake Close,  
Hough Green,  
Widnes,  
Cheshire. WA8 4FN

If there are costs involved, I can either send you a cheque or provide visa number by return email. In the case of multiple choices with varying costs, you can either make an educated guess on what would best suit or offer a few priced choices.

I look forward to your reply,

Regards,

Roy

**APPENDIX C**  
**The Entire Corpus**

**Types of business correspondence texts:**

Letters	413
Faxes	151
E-mails	56
Memos	12
Telexes	4
<i>Total number</i>	<b>636</b>

**Sub-genres:**

1. Letters of announcement (171)
2. 2a Letters of request (93)  
2b Answers to letters of request (102)
3. Letters of recommendation (5)
4. 4a Order letters (22)  
4b Answers to order letters (4)
5. Letters of sales promotion (31)
6. Letters of business negotiation (43)
7. Letters of claim and/or complaint (5)
8. Letters of adjustment (9)
9. 9a Letters of invitation (53)  
9b Answers to letters of invitation (25)
10. 10a Letters of appreciation, greetings or gratitude (35)  
10b Answers to letters of appreciation, greetings or gratitude (16)
11. 11a Letters of congratulations (5)  
11b Answers letters of congratulations (6)
12. Letters of sympathy (2)
13. Letters of job application (9)

**Nationalities of the correspondents:**

Thai (TH)	336
Non-Thai (Native English Speakers) (NT)	256
Non-Thai-Non-Native English Speakers (NTNS)	44

**Positions of the correspondent (as self-reported on the letters):**

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. CEO               | 14. Auditor           |
| 2. Chairman          | 15. Researcher        |
| 3. President         | 16. Senior Consultant |
| 4. Vice President    | 17. Consultant        |
| 5. Managing Director | 18. Engineer          |
| 6. Director          | 19. Supervisor        |
| 7. Manager           | 20. Prime Minister    |
| 8. Officer           | 21. Teacher           |
| 9. Governor          | 22. Secretary         |
| 10. Ambassador       | 23. Head              |
| 11. Editor           | 24. Solicitor         |
| 12. Partner          | 25. Counsellor        |
| 13. Professor        |                       |



## APPENDIX D

### The Background to the twenty sales promotion letters

NO.	TYPE OF CORRESPONDENCE	TYPE OF BUSINESS	WRITTEN BY	POSITION OF THE CORRESPONDENT
1	Letter	Hospitality	NT (American)	Manager
2	Letter	University	NT (American)	Senior Associate Dean
3	Letter	Finance	NT (British)	Director
4	Letter	Finance	NT (American)	Director
5	Letter	Finance	NT (American)	Executive Vice President
6	Letter	Hospitality	NT (British)	Manager
7	Letter	Credit card	TH	Manager
8	Letter	Credit card	TH	Manager
9	Letter	Credit card	TH	Manager
10	Letter	Credit card	TH	Manager
11	Letter	Airline/Credit card	TH	Executive Vice President
12	Letter	Insurance/Credit card	TH	Director
13	Letter	Insurance/Credit card	TH	Deputy CEO (Chief Executive Officer)
14	Fax	Marketing	TH	Director
15	Fax	Hospitality	TH	Managing Director
16	Letter	Hospitality	TH	Sales and Marketing Executive
17	Letter	Hospitality	TH	Chairman
18	Letter	Finance	TH	Vice Chairman
19	Letter	Environment	TH	Managing Director
20	Letter	Environment	TH	Senior Consultant

## APPENDIX E

### Coding Sheet for the Analysis of Appraisal Epithets in Sales Promotion Letters

Letter type & No.	Epithet	Appraised	Category	Subcategory
NT01	specialty-priced	sailings	Appreciation	valuation
	tremendous	value	Amplification	augmenting
NT02	senior	Harvard Business School faculty members	Judgement	social esteem
	foremost	innovators	Judgement	social esteem
	new	course (#1)	Appreciation	valuation
	new	course (#2)	Appreciation	valuation
NT03	senior	management	Judgement	social esteem
	major	international financial institutions	Appreciation	valuation
	leading	bank analysts	Judgement	social esteem
	new	technology	Appreciation	valuation
	spacious	surroundings	Appreciation	composition
	elegant	surroundings	Appreciation	composition
	premier	centres	Appreciation	valuation
	challenging	forum	Appreciation	reaction
	stimulating	forum	Appreciation	reaction
	valuable	insights	Appreciation	valuation
	competitive	behaviour	Judgement	social esteem
NT04	high	quality	Amplification	augmenting
	high quality	human resources	Appreciation	valuation
	(the) latest	hands-on methods	Appreciation	valuation
	(the) latest	techniques	Appreciation	valuation
NT05	(the) first large- scale	research	Appreciation	valuation
	superior	hedge funds	Appreciation	valuation
	best	hedge funds	Appreciation	valuation
	groundbreaking	research	Appreciation	valuation
NT06	unique	group (hotels)	Appreciation	valuation



	quality quality quality best-loved renowned superb leading perfect fine fine (the) most comfortable whole  whole superb elegant	accommodation food service hotels larder food chefs way food wine surroundings  range of activities  range of pursuits country hotel town house	Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Judgement Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation  Amplification  Amplification Appreciation Appreciation	valuation valuation valuation reaction valuation valuation social esteem valuation valuation valuation composition  augmenting  augmenting valuation composition
AMEX07	exclusive all all  every unique delicious excellent full outstanding (the) finest  attentive broad excellent elegant relaxed (the) very freshest	50% saving food non-alcoholic drinks restaurant privilege dining treat daily buffet a la carte menu Sunday brunch continental cuisine service selection dining ambience ambience seafood	Appreciation Amplification Amplification  Amplification Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Amplification Appreciation Appreciation  Appreciation Amplification Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation	valuation augmenting augmenting  augmenting valuation valuation valuation augmenting valuation valuation  valuation augmenting valuation composition composition valuation
AMEX08	more	privileges	Amplification	augmenting

	superb wonderful special exclusive great	holiday atmosphere offer privileges hospitality	Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation	valuation valuation valuation valuation
AMEX09	tasty full full	dining privileges range of rewards range of privileges	Appreciation Amplification Amplification	valuation augmenting augmenting
AMEX10	festive exclusive wide  festive taste-tempting perfect wide  superb superb superb special authentic  delicious  fresh-cut fresh-baked festive great festive great	privileges privileges range of family restaurants break ice-cream accompaniment range of superb red, white and rosé wines red wines white wines rosé wines occasion Vietnamese cuisine Vietnamese cuisine flowers festive goodies goodies place buffet value	Appreciation Appreciation Amplification  Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Amplification  Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation  Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation	composition valuation augmenting  composition composition valuation augmenting  valuation valuation valuation composition composition composition valuation composition valuation
AMEX11	fastest exceptional new	way privileges Travel Rewards Card	Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation	valuation valuation valuation



AMEX12	comprehensive highest wide unique added extra extra additional	insurance plan covers range of benefits plan benefit travel expenses hotel expenses cost	Appreciation Amplification Amplification Appreciation Amplification Amplification Appreciation	composition augmenting augmenting valuation augmenting augmenting augmenting augmenting
AMEX13	great special extra	opportunity premium protection	Appreciation Appreciation Amplification	valuation composition augmenting
TH14	expert stimulating relevant	supervision lectures tasks	Judgement Appreciation Appreciation	social esteem reaction composition
TH15	special	rates	Appreciation	valuation
TH16	unique  combined highly experienced eminent dynamic successful positive	forthcoming seminars courses team  practitioners programs workshop business results	Appreciation  Appreciation Judgement  Judgement Appreciation Appreciation Appreciation	valuation  composition social esteem  social esteem composition valuation valuation
TH17	special special all	benefits privileges Felix properties	Appreciation Appreciation Amplification	valuation valuation augmenting
TH18	special special	occasion oil paintings	Appreciation Appreciation	valuation valuation
TH19	full  Thai-speaking experienced wide  technical	range of environmental services professionals  range of expertise environmental	Amplification  Judgement  Amplification  Appreciation	augmenting  social esteem  augmenting  valuation

	holistic	scope of work environmental scope of work	Appreciation	valuation
TH20	senior specialist specialist all	Thai associates project inputs advice aspects of the environment	Judgement Appreciation Appreciation Amplification	social esteem valuation valuation augmenting



APPENDIX F

Questionnaire

for a PhD research on written business discourse

Miss Ora-Ong Chakorn, University of Warwick  
January 2000

Personal Information

1. Title:      ☐ Mr                      ☐ Mrs                      ☐ Ms                      ☐ Miss
2. First Name: .....
3. Surname: .....
4. Nationality: .....
5. Age: .....                      Sex:    ☐ Male                      ☐ Female
6. Occupation: .....

Attached herewith are ten letters. Please kindly read and classify them by ticking in the boxes below.

Classification of the Letters (see attached)

	Letter of request	Letter of invitation	Another type of letter (e.g. of introduction) which incorporates a request	Letter with NO request
#1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
#10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you have any problem in classifying the letters?      ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

If 'yes', please explain or comment: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(please continue overleaf if necessary.)

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

## APPENDIX G

### A sample of a Thai governmental letter in English



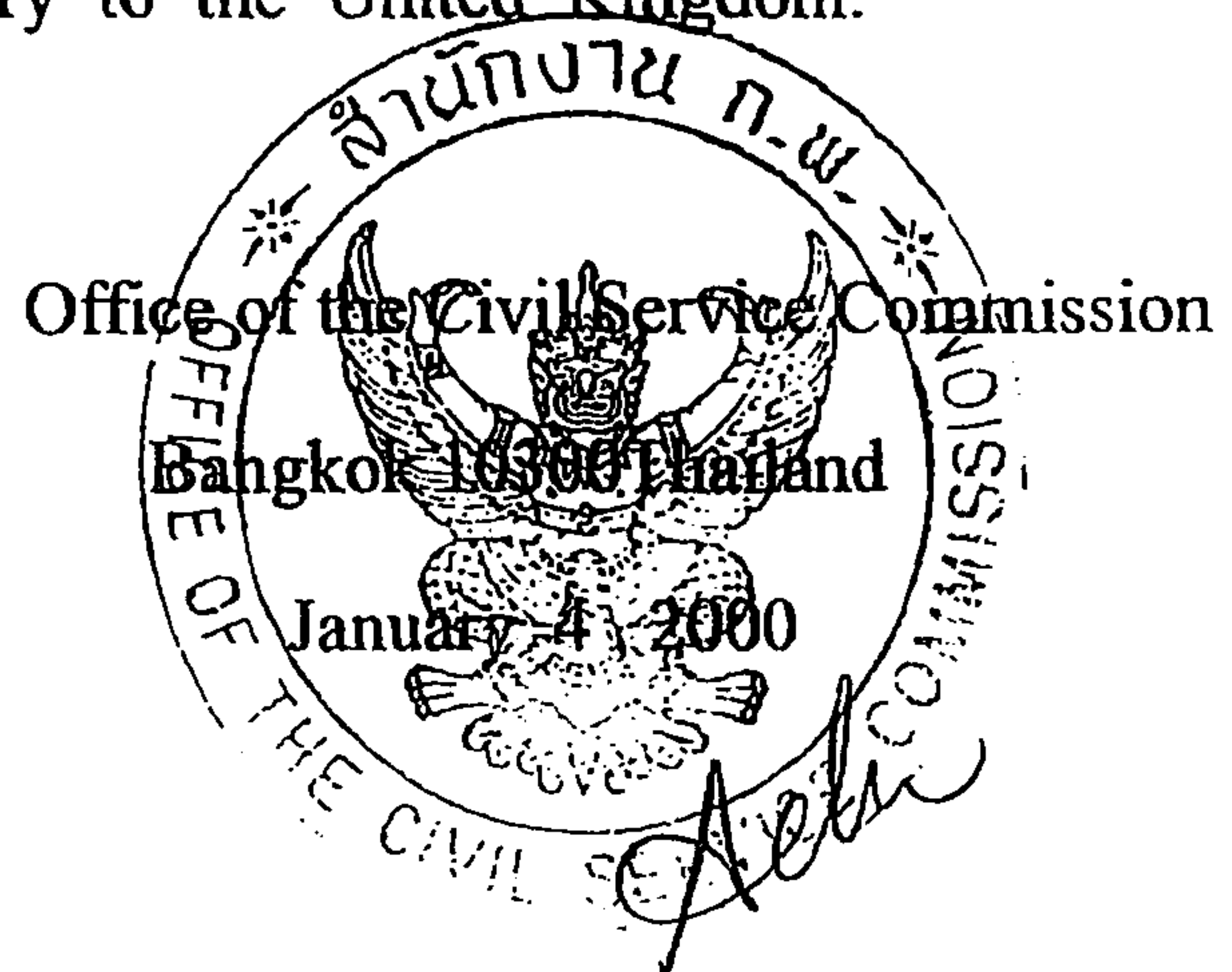
No 0706.9/ 27 6

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Miss. Ora-Ong Chakorn is a recipient of the Royal Thai Government Scholarship student. Throughout study period, all of her educational and living expenses will be funded by the Royal Thai Government.

During her stay in the United Kingdom, this student will be under the supervision of Office of Educational Affairs, Royal Thai Embassy, 28 Princes Gate, London SW7 1QF Tel. 020-584-4538 who will make arrangements for a suitable school, college or university and will be fully responsible for this student's general welfare and accommodation.

The Royal Thai Government would greatly appreciate any assistance that can be rendered to this student in connection with entry to the United Kingdom.





APPENDIX G  
(Continued)

A sample of a Thai governmental letter in Thai



ROYAL THAI EMBASSY,  
30, QUEEN'S GATE,  
LONDON, SW7 5JB.

ที่ 55001/ว. 2355

28 พฤศจิกายน 2543

เรื่อง การเลือกตั้งสมาชิกสภาผู้แทนราษฎรนอกราชอาณาจักร (ส.ส.)

เรียน ผู้มีสิทธิเลือกตั้ง

อ้างถึง หนังสือสถานเอกอัครราชทูตฯ ที่ 55001/ว.2308 ลงวันที่ 20 พฤศจิกายน 2543

อนุสนธิหนังสือสถานเอกอัครราชทูตฯ ที่อ้างถึงแจ้งว่า สถานเอกอัครราชทูตฯ จะจัดการเลือกตั้งสมาชิกสภาผู้แทนราษฎร (ส.ส.) นอกราชอาณาจักร ณ ที่เลือกตั้งกลางในสถานเอกอัครราชทูตฯ ในวันเสาร์ที่ 30 ธันวาคม 2543 ระหว่างเวลา 09.30 – 15.30 น. ความแจ้งแล้ว นั้น

โดยที่พิจารณาเห็นว่า ผู้มีสิทธิเลือกตั้งบางส่วนอาจไม่สามารถไปใช้สิทธิเลือกตั้งในวันดังกล่าว เนื่องจากจะเดินทางไปต่างประเทศ ดังนั้น เพื่ออำนวยความสะดวกแก่ผู้ที่จะใช้สิทธิเลือกตั้งสถานเอกอัครราชทูตฯ จึงเห็นสมควรเปลี่ยนแปลงกำหนดวันลงคะแนน ณ ที่เลือกตั้งกลาง จากที่ประกาศไว้เดิมคือวันเสาร์ที่ 30 ธันวาคม 2543 เปลี่ยนเป็นดังนี้

กำหนดวันเลือกตั้ง วันอาทิตย์ที่ 17 ธันวาคม 2543

เวลา 09.30 – 15.30 น.

ส่วนรายละเอียดอื่น ๆ เกี่ยวกับการเลือกตั้งในครั้งนี้ สถานเอกอัครราชทูตฯ จะแจ้งให้ทราบต่อไป

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดทราบ

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

(นายวิทย์ รายนานนท์)

เอกอัครราชทูต

APPENDIX H

Statistical Analysis (SPSS 8.0): Salutations

Type	Means TH – NT	df	T-value
Dear+First Name	0.001 – 0.107	325	-.658
Dear+Khun+First Name	0.225 – 0.200	325	.535
Dear+Non-specific Term	0.128 – 0.179	325	-1.258
Dear+Sir	0.198 – 0.114	325	2.036*
Dear+Title+Surname	0.364 – 0.400	325	-.669

p. ≤ 0.5\*



APPENDIX I

Statistical Analysis (SPSS 8.0): Complimentary Closes

Type	Means TH – NT	df	T-value
Yours sincerely	0.558 – 0.568	400	-.201
Sincerely yours	0.163 – 0.001	400	2.182*
Best regards	0.163 – 0.001	400	2.377*
Sincerely	0.001 – 0.154	400	-3.704**
Yours faithfully	0.001 – 0.107	400	-1.346

p. ≤ 0.5\*

p. ≤ .05\*\*